

An aerial photograph of a surfer riding a large, powerful wave. The surfer is positioned at the base of the wave's face, leaving a white, foamy trail behind them. The water is a deep, dark blue, and the sky above is a lighter blue with some white clouds. The overall mood is one of challenge and triumph.

FACING LIFE'S  
**HURDLES**

[ WORRY • FAILURE • IDENTITY • DASHED HOPES ]

GUIDE BOOK



# FACING LIFE'S HURDLES

"Man is born to trouble, as surely as sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). Well, there's a cheery thought! But you can forgive Job, with all that he was going through, for feeling that way. And he's not wrong that one of the certainties of life is challenges. It's the reality of living in a world groans, as we look forward to the Day when God redeems all things in Christ (Rom. 8:19-23).

Some of the problems we face come from outside of ourselves – a friend responds to you in a cruel way. But other challenges come from inside of us – anger, guilt, hopelessness. And these are often the greater challenges.

So, how do we face those hurdles? In this short series, we'll pick just four:

- Worry
- Failure
- Identity
- Dashed Hopes

We want to ask: what does it look like to face these challenges well? Our goal isn't to find pat answers, as if we can make our problems vanish. But we want to face these challenges in a way that relies on Christ and looks to the real hope and help that we find in Him.



STUDY 1

# [WORRY]



## STARTER

What are some of the things we tend to worry about?

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### Read Philippians 4:4-13

The Philippians are facing troubles (1:28, 3:1-3, 4:1-2) but Paul points them toward an inward peace they can experience through it all (v7, v9). And he gives instructions here to help us find that peace.

### Rejoice in the Lord Always, v4

**1.** What do you think it looks like to "Rejoice in the Lord, always"? Are there habits or strategies that have helped you in practical ways to do this?

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**2.** How can you possibly "Rejoice in the Lord" when things aren't going well?

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## Let your gentleness be evident to all, v5

The word "gentleness" in verse 5 is also translated as "graciousness" (CSB), "forbearance" (RSV), "reasonableness" (ESV), "moderation" (KJV). It's trying to be gracious and fair as you consider a situation.

**3.** Paul knows that anxiety often effects our relationships! Discuss the temptation we face not to be reasonable when we're anxious.

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**4.** How does being gracious and fair-minded help us maintain a sense of peace in difficult situations?

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## Pray, v6

**5.** What difference does (1) Prayer and (2) Thanksgiving make to you when you're anxious. Why do you think this is?

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**6.** Share with your group strategies to help you be intentional in prayer and thanksgiving.

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# Think about things which are true and lovely, v8

7. How can worry involve thinking about things that we do not know to be true?

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8. How can thinking about things which are noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy help reduce anxiety?

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9. Share with your group ways you try to reduce thinking on unhelpful things, and bring to your mind things that are helpful.

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 **TAKE AWAY**

10. Write down one big take away for you as you seek to deal with worry.

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**MTS and Trainee**  
**CELEBRATION BBQ**  
NEXT SUNDAY 530PM AT PETRIE

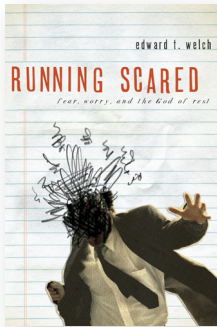
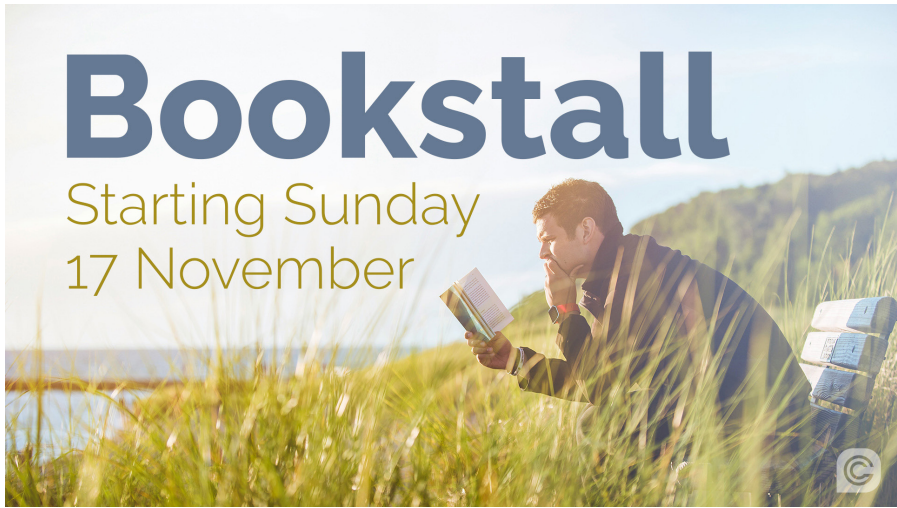
**JUMPING CASTLE**   **SAUSAGE SIZZLE**   **MTS & TRAINEESHIP STORIES**

The poster features a background of sausages grilling on a barbecue. In the bottom left, there is a small illustration of a yellow and red jumping castle. In the bottom center, a hand is shown holding a sausage on a bun. In the bottom right, a group of seven diverse young adults is smiling. Three red banners with white text are positioned at the bottom, each containing one of the event highlights.



# Bookstall

Starting Sunday  
17 November



## ON THE BOOKSTALL

**"Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest"**

by Ed Welch



**Bible Talk Notes**  
Sunday 17 November

**FAILURE**

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## STUDY 2

# [ FAILURE ]



### STARTER

What are different ways that a sense of having failed might express itself in our lives?

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### Mark and failure

**1.** Reflect on the Bible talk from Sunday. Discuss any encouragements you found in tracing the life of Mark through the New Testament.

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### You can be forgiven

Plenty of times we've failed and we didn't do anything wrong. But when we have, it can bring (sometimes deep) pain. But there is comfort in Jesus.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ... if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

(1 John 1:9)

**2.** What do you think stops us from admitting when we've done the wrong thing?

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**3.** What do you think stops us from genuinely accepting that we are forgiven?

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**4.** What attitudes and habits can help us admit when we've done wrong and genuinely accept when we are forgiven?

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## **You can be useful**

So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. (2 Timothy 2:21)

Bring Mark with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry. (2 Timothy 4:11)

Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10)

**5.** What difference does it make, to know that we can still be useful, after we have failed? Why is this important for us to genuinely believe?

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## You should not retreat

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

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**6.** Consider an area of life where we might fail (eg. Parenting, friendships, work, church etc.). Failures can involve a helpful period of reflection, learning, readjustment and healing. But spend some time discussing, with reference to specific areas of life.

**a.** What might it look like to unhelpfully retreat after failure?

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**b.** What it might look like to press on after failure?

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**c.** What do you bring, having failed, which may in fact help you and others for the future?

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## God uses failures

*Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)*

**7.** God likes to work with failures. Do you think you believe that? Is there any evidence in your life of struggling to believe this, or, on the other hand, of growing in believing this?

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**8.** Share examples of when God has used weakness, or failure, to bring about good (eg. growth in Christ, being able to help others etc).

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## **TAKE AWAY**

**9.** Write down one take away for you from tonight. See if you can turn this into an actionable step – something to do this week to help you deal with your past or have a right mindset as you face failures in the future.

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## **PRAY**

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STUDY 3

# [IDENTITY]



## STARTER

What are some of the different places people seek their identity today?

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## The image of God

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."  
(Genesis 1:26)

**1.** How are we supplied here with a source of identity? And how are we supplied with value and purpose?

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**2.** As we turn away from who we are in God, we become disoriented and insecure. Consider your answers to question 1. Is there anything fragile about where people are seeking their identity?

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# Losing and Finding Yourself

"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it." (Jesus. Matthew 10:38-39)

**3.** What is surprising or challenging about Jesus words here?

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**4.** Is there anything here that rings true for you, in what you have experienced in your own life? Why do you think it works this way?

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**5.** Read Brian Rosner's comments below. You may want to discuss any new ideas that come up.

*"In the first part of Matthew 10:39, to find yourself is the equivalent of pursuing a self-made self. It is to find your own way, to seek your own personal happiness above all else, to focus on pursuing your life dreams, to follow relentlessly your own path, with little thought to those around you who might, in fact, get in your way. Jesus is not condemning ambition or achievement itself. Rather, finding yourself in the first half of Jesus's saying is about focused self-creation, the essence of expressive individualism. According to Jesus, in the ultimate tragic irony, seeking to establish your own identity results in losing your identity.*

*But also, according to Jesus, in order to find yourself, your true and lasting identity, you need to relinquish the quest for self-assertion and look in another direction. ...As Morris says, "To concentrate one's best energies on oneself is to destroy oneself, whereas to lose oneself in the service of Christ*

*and others is to find oneself" (Brian Rosner, How to Find Yourself: Why Looking Inwards is not the Answer)*

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## **Something New in Christ**

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (Romans 3:21-22)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1)

### **6.** By faith in Jesus

- You have "the righteousness of God". When God looks at you, He sees the goodness of Jesus (See also, 2 Cor. 5:21).
- You are adopted as a child of God.

How do these truths make you feel? What difference do they make to your sense of self?

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**7.** To what extent do you think you live with imprint of these truths upon you? Could that make a practical difference to us if it were more dominant in our own self-perception?

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**8.** How do these truths help in some of the areas where we struggle with identity?

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**9.** As a Christian community, how can we help one another to see ourselves as we are in Jesus?

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## **TAKE AWAY**

**10.** Write down one take away for you from tonight. See if you can turn this into an actionable step – something to do this week to express, or remind you of, your own identity in Christ.

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## **PRAY**

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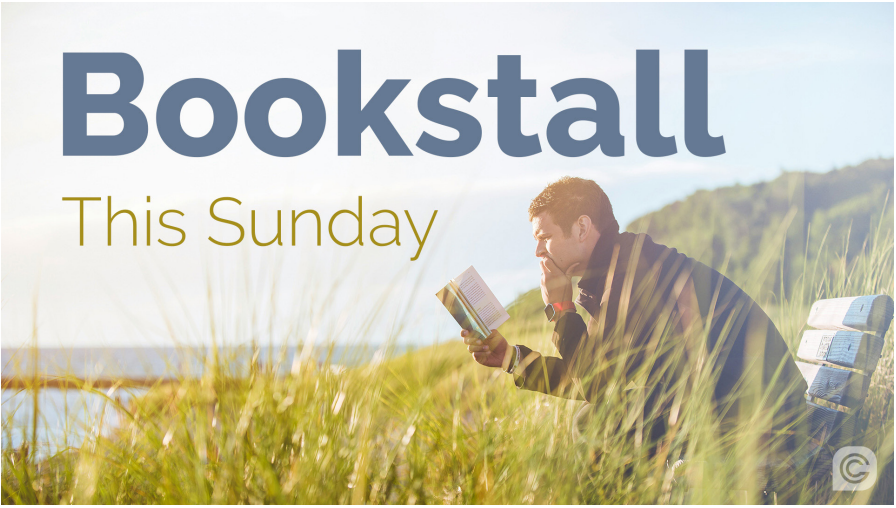
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# Bookstall

This Sunday



HOW TO FIND

— YOURSELF —

— WHY —

— LOOKING INWARD —

— IS NOT —

— THE ANSWER —

BRIAN ROSNER

FOREWORD BY CARL S. FREEMAN

## ON THE BOOKSTALL

**“How to find yourself:  
Why looking inward is not the answer”**

by Brian Rosner



## YOU MAY WANT TO LISTEN TO



**“The problem with ‘You be You’**  
with Brian Rosner



**“Why Is Our Culture So Obsessed  
with Identity?”** Brian Rosner

# ALSO ON THE BOOKSTALL

- ▶ Anxiety: A Student's Guide to Anxiety
- ▶ Overcomers: God's Vision for you to Thrive in an Age of Anxiety and Outrage
- ▶ Depression, Anxiety, and the Christian Life: Practical Wisdom from Richard Baxter
- ▶ How To Find Yourself: Why Looking Inwards is Not the Answer
- ▶ Be True to Yourself: Why It Doesn't Mean What You Think it Does
- ▶ Live your Truth: Exposing Popular Deceptions that Makes us Anxious, Exhausted and Self-Obsessed
- ▶ What Does Depression Mean for My Faith?
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense
- ▶ Untangling Emotions
- ▶ Encouragement: How Words Change Lives
- ▶ Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love
- ▶ The Air we Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress and Equality





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**CHRISTCENTRAL**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH