

Series - Breakthrough &amp; Fruitfulness

Date/s - 25 Sep 2016

Topic - Living An Adventurous Life of Faith

Speaker/s - Pastor John Koe

**Welcome** [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

**Worship** [15 min]

You may select songs like "Breathe" or "Seek Ye First"

**Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will understand:

1. The importance of knowing the Word of God.
2. How to recognize and act upon the spoken Word of God.

**Word** [45 min]

Pastor John Koe's father was a poor and uneducated immigrant from China. He had come to Singapore as a teenager having lost his father at the age of 3 and worked as a coolie for a long time ago. Pastor John himself has 7 siblings. He is the youngest. They led a meagre life. Eventually, his father started a small business selling and renting pressure lamps and stoves.

He shared that he was an unwanted child and that his mother had wanted to abort him. For some reasons, the abortion failed. As a result, he had that sense of rejection as he grew up. At the age of seven, he together with his siblings helped out in his father's shop. It was a tough and hard life. He also suffered from ill health. At the age of 15, he had severe bouts of migraine that would last for seven to eight hours per day and even months. Pastor John began to develop a mindset of poverty and lack that would enslave him through much of his adult life. He had have suicidal thoughts. At about this time, He came to know the Lord. However, he soon backslided and turned to another faith, devoting his time to understand the non-Christian scriptures and chanting almost every day. At the age of 17, Pastor John left his parents' home to stay out on his own.

It was not until he was in his second year of his National Service that he encountered Jesus through a friend who invited him to attend a church. Since then, he started reading the Bible and served God in various ministries. Ps John began to take God's spoken word seriously. As he memorized, meditated and journaled, God began to transform his life and brought wholeness from within. One verse that struck him was Isaiah 49:23 - "Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed". Another verse that impacted his life was Psalms 25:3 - "Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed".

From someone who was in financial trouble, in poor health and without a career, God gave him a purpose. While waiting upon the Lord, and through God's guidance and prompting, he eventually built up a business. His health improved tremendously and he could see a bright future ahead (Romans 10:11 - For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed"). Psalms 107:20 also spoke to Pastor John - "He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions."

As he got more and more involved in serving God, the church leaders approached him to be a full-time worker. Pastor John sought God but God told him it was not the right time. The direction was clear: for the moment, to stay in the workplace in the commercial world to be an effective testimony for God.

One day in 1997, a group of youth leaders prayed with him and God spoke to Pastor John that it was time to move on to the next phase in his faith journey. Pastor John was to sell away his business and be a full time missionary to China. He was very anxious and doubts crept in whether this was indeed what God wanted him to do. It was a struggle as he reluctantly came to grips as he would have to sell away his thriving business, leave a comfortable life in Singapore and to become a missionary in China. He spent time pondering about this.

Then in year 2000, a friend contacted him and shared that God told him to invite Pastor John for a mission trip to Hei Long Jiang in China. Through this revelation via his friend, Pastor John decided to do what God told him to do. He went for the mission trip and through time, set up various ministries in China. His ministry in China began to take shape. Very soon, upon his obedience and acting upon the spoken Word of God, this ministry began to take a life of its own. Without much effort or focus on fund raising, they began to generate much needed resources. God's prophecy that Pastor John will be "a bridge for resources to flow to My people" has come into fruition. It has been a long journey but a God-led and satisfying one. Pastor John closed with this verse:

"You shall remember all the way which the LORD, your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD." (Deuteronomy 8:2-3)

Pastor John concluded by sharing that God's Word is a seed (as in the parable of the Sower) and we are the soil that the seed fell on. If we were to act upon the Word that God has spoken to us, we will grow exponentially in His grace and enabled for mighty works. Our ultimate provision comes from God. Every time we obey, it brings about a divine outcome. So, what is God speaking to you now? Which would you be: the good soil or the barren ground?

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1 **What is one thing that caught your attention about Pastor John Koe's testimony?** [5 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A recap question. It is good to steer this question towards having the mindset that resulted from Pastor John's wilderness on how God, through His Word, restored to him financially and his health. Usually, God put us through the wilderness to shape our lives and values so that we see the importance of relying on Him instead of our "riches" and "security". We should never allow the gifts of God to distract us from the Giver.

- 2 **Read Deuteronomy 8:2 to 3. These verses mentioned that God "tested" the Israelites through the 40 years in the wilderness. Why was this necessary and how is their testing relevant for us today?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A relate question. Usually, the tests result in two purposes: 1) Shaping our characters and values, 2) So that the Glory is His and not ours.

Many of us are more inclined to see "blessings" and "prosperity" but fail to understand that God is more interested in molding our character, values and image to His. When we have this "godly" nature, we are more able to withstand hardship or trying situations when we are called to do His work. The Israelites continued to carry with them their Egypt's way of thinking and living into the wilderness. They turned to the golden calf at one point. God wanted to instill in them the necessity to rely on Him when they were

wandering in the desert for 40 years. In Deuteronomy 8:2-3, God taught the Israelites to gather manna daily. Beyond being fed daily, God wanted to lead the Israelites to acknowledge their greater need for God. This became useful when the Israelites had to fight powerful enemies to claim their inheritance. When we go through tests, we are removing much of our own values, habits and even our flawed selfish belief system. In place, we put on a Christ-like nature. Likewise, Pastor John has to learn how to rely on God when he made sacrifices to become a missionary in China. His ministry in China began to prosper and the glory belongs to Yahweh. We are only vessels created for His purposes. Before we become partakers of God's work, God usually put us through "fire" and "trials" to change our earthly mindset, character and values to be Christ-like. At the same time, we cannot boast that the success of our ministry is because of our effort.

### 3 Pastor John shared that God speaks to us through the Bible. What other ways can we hear from God?

**One of Pastor John's confirmations on his calling to China was when God specifically prompted a friend to invite him for a mission trip to Hei Long Jiang. How can one confirm if the "spoken" Word that one received is what God wants?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A relate and reflect question. God can speak to us through:

- a person who shared with you
- a sermon that for no reason stirred your heart
- a situation or experience that impacted your life
- a verse in the Bible
- a word spoken over you
- a dream or even a vision
- He has been speaking but we do not hear Him!

However, the more importantly it is to ask for a confirmation from the Lord and remain centred on the Word of God when seeking Him. Many of us had already made up our minds while we "seek" Him. Most of the time (not all the time), it is something that could make us uncomfortable which God want us to be a part of. King David understood this in 2 Samuel 24:24 - "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." Pastor John Koe was very uncomfortable when he was told to go to Hei Long Jiang. He had to give up his thriving and prosperous business. Another way to confirm is to speak with your Church pastors or leaders. Preferably someone who knows you personally and knows what you are going through. Sometimes, it is also good to look back at your life experiences and see how God has actually put you in situations that you are not able to recognize His will at that time. God will help you to recall them but you must make time to seek Him patiently. Deliberately take time out to pray and fast. Purposefully, spend time with Him and wait on Him with a clear mind, not making up your mind too soon or ignoring Him totally. Do not deliberately look for signs and wonders. Let God speak to you. Be patient and do not rush. It usually comes from the Holy Spirit's conviction in your heart. A sense of knowing His peace that accompanies - a knowledge that is stemmed from faith which offers security in terms of resources.

### 4 Connecting with God through the Bible is the single most basic and important way to hear God. What are the reasons why some Christians do not read and study the Bible despite ample resources and opportunities available. How can you and your cell group commit to read and study the Bible? [10 min]

**Leader's Notes:** A reflect and response question. Some of us like to laze around doing nothing or pursuing what we want instead of studying God's word even though there are courses offered by Church to learn. For example, when asked why not join a Bible-study (for eg. Precept) class? One possible answer is the need to 'study' or do homework. Are we even spending our time with God daily? Perhaps we think we

*are. How long and how deep are our time spent with God? God deserves more. We need to make that time for God. We also need to accord priority and weight to studying and meditating on His Word. As you begin to be more and more aware of His presence, He will begin to prompt you, to speak to your heart. He might even speak to you in an audible voice! When we wait for Him patiently, He will respond. However, the fact remains: you must spend adequate time with God in Word and in worship.*

**Works** [10 min]

Let's pray

1. Every RiverLifer to set aside time reading & memorising God's word. Treasuring every spoken Word they have received.

**Announcements****1. RIVERLIFE KINDERGARTEN ANNUAL GRADUATION CONCERT –CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Sat, 22 Oct | 10.30am to 1pm | Worship Centre

Combined Concert Rehearsal: Wed, 5 Oct & Fri, 14 Oct | 8.30–11.30am

Full-dress rehearsal: Thu, 20 Oct | 8.30–11.30am

Sign up at the Information Counter by next Sun, 2 Oct. For enquiries, please contact Margie Tan at 65114167, or email her at [margietan@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg](mailto:margietan@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg).

**2. FILIPINO COMBINED SERVICE**

Sun, 2 Oct | 2pm | Victory Chapel

Speaker: Pastor Ben KC Lee

If you know any Filipinos or they are employed by you, we encourage you to bring them to this service.

**3. MINISTRY TEAM WORKER (MTW) TRAINING – For Leaders Only****Run 1**

Level 1: Sun, 2 Oct | 2.30–5.30pm

Level 2: Sun, 23 Oct | 2.30–5.30pm

**Run 2**

Level 1: Sun, 13 Nov | 2.30–5.30pm

Level 2: Sun, 27 Nov | 2.30–5.30pm

All training sessions are held in Grace Chapel.

To attend the training, please email your Name, Contact Number & Cell or Ministry you are serving in to Anita Cheok at [anitacheok@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:anitacheok@riverlife.org.sg), or contact her at 65114138