



Be Brave: Soft Front | September 5, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Can we be both kind and brave? Do they have anything in common? Read more about how Jesus is the perfect example of both kindness and bravery below.

Key Verses

Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

"People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of

God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them."

Discussion

If you've ever spent time watching Animal Planet or The Discovery Channel on TV, you've probably seen some pretty surprising images and videos of wild animals. It wouldn't be abnormal to watch a lion swim across a channel to pounce on and kill an alligator, but then just a few minutes later to see that same lion rolling around and playing with its cubs. Although it's a pretty crazy contrast, this kind of scene is what author Brené Brown might describe as having both a strong back as well as a soft front.

1. What's the craziest scene with wild animals you've experienced, whether on television or in the wild?
2. What about the contrast of the lion's two behaviors is so interesting? Why are we as humans intrigued by it?

Although we might appreciate the contrast in an animal like a lion, Brené Brown argues in her book, *Braving the Wilderness*, that in order to be brave we need to have both a strong back and soft front as well. In today's world, it almost feels like you need to have a strong back in order to also have a soft front. It takes bravery and courage to be compassionate and kind. Interestingly, Jesus somehow embodied both of these characteristics at the same time.

3. What does it look like to have a strong back and soft front as a human? What are some of the qualities or characteristics of that kind of person?
4. Do you agree that it takes both a strong back and a soft front to be brave? Or that we need a strong back to also have a strong front? How have you seen this played out in your own life?

In Mark 10:13-16, we read about a bunch of parents who bring their children to see Jesus. Although he was in the middle of doing something else, Jesus told the disciples that it was important for him to be with the children. He even got a little angry with the disciples, and with a strong back, told them they were incorrect. And after that, we read about Jesus being very tender with the children, having a soft front, taking them in his arms to bless them.

5. What about Jesus being direct with his disciples makes him have a strong back? Have you seen or read about other instances in the Bible where Jesus has a strong back?
6. Why do you think Jesus is so tender toward the children? What does it teach us about how we should interact with other people in the world?

What's Next?

Many today would argue that our personal strength comes from a rugged individualism, a belief that we need to puff up our chest and prove ourselves in the world to be strong and courageous. Brené Brown says that it's actually more courageous to admit that we gather our strength from interconnectedness. She claims that having a group mentality – an understanding that we need other people and that other people matter – makes us even more courageous.

This week, as you live out your faith, consider the juxtaposition of having both a strong back as well as a soft front. Look for places to both be courageous but also kind and to show compassion.