

Agenda 3 – *Unafraid* by Adam Hamilton

Part 3: Failure, Disappointing Others, Insignificance, and Loneliness (Chapters 9-12)

Based on *Unafraid Leader Guide* by Alex Joyner.

- Welcome and greet one another
- Agree on confidentiality and to practice sacred listening as everyone shares their sacred stories, keeping in mind that we want to leave enough time for everyone to share.
- Gratitude Practice: Share (within 60 seconds) something you are each grateful for this past week.

Centering Practice:

Lectio Divina is a centering practice using scripture. Take a moment to center yourselves by getting comfortable in your seat with your feet planted on the floor, now take a couple of deep breaths, breathing in slowly and then out slowly. Have someone read out loud the following scripture or take turns reading, then read it one more time to yourselves. While the scripture is being read, listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you. When everyone is finished, share briefly the word or phrase.

1 Corinthians 13 New Living Translation (NLT)

Love Is the Greatest

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Book and Bible Study and Discussion

Reflect on Failure and Risk

In Chapter 9, Adam Hamilton explores the fear of failure and the shame and loss we associate with it. He also quotes the author J.K. Rowling, who overcame her fear of failure by recognizing that “it is impossible to live without failing at something” and then risked failure in order to achieve her goals.

Share a brief story of a time when your fears of failing at something were realized.

- What were the consequences of your failure? Were they as extreme as you anticipated they would be?
- How did you grow from the experience? What did you learn about your own capacity to handle failure?
- What keeps us from taking the risks we need to take in order to find courage and confidence?

Study Scripture Together

In Chapter 10, Adam Hamilton describes how, during the last presidential elections, he asked members of his congregation to memorize two Bible verses and print them on cards to carry with them (*Matthew 7:12a and James 1:19b*).

***“You should treat people in the same way that you want people to treat you.”
(Matthew 7:12a)***

Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. (James 1:19b)

Examine the Impact of Loneliness

In Chapter 12, Adam Hamilton discusses the “epidemic of loneliness” that many Americans are experiencing. The beginning of the chapter discusses the “attachment theory” of John Bowlby and the three types of attachments he identified: secure, anxious, and avoidant.

Chapter 12 titled “God’s First ‘Not Good.’” Page 116-118

- How is human connection under stress in contemporary America?
- Where do you see loneliness in your community? In your life?

- With which of the three types of attachment do you most closely identify?

Remember the FEAR Acronym as a Tool for Confronting Fear

Face your fears with faith

Examine your assumptions in light of the facts

Attack your anxieties with action.

Release your cares to God

- What faith resources do I have to address this fear?
- How realistic are the fears?
- What actions might I take to attack my anxieties?
- What practices would help me release my cares to God?

In Chapter 12, under the heading “Learning to Re Engage,” Adam Hamilton offers some practical suggestions for reaching out to others and overcoming our fears of not being able to connect. We can, reengage with others despite our initial discomfort, invest in relationships, visit those who are lonely, get involved in our church or faith community. Spend a few minutes silently reflecting on these suggestions and considering one action they might take this week to move toward one of them. Invite the group members to commit to that action by writing it down on a piece of paper that they will take with them.

What are your take-aways?

How can we pray for you?

Closing Prayer (Matthew 7:12a and James 1:19b)

“You should treat people in the same way that you want people to treat you.” Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. Amen.