



Small Group Study Guide

UNAFRAID

May 3, 2020
**FEAR OF
THE OTHER**

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us to be people who love our neighbors as we love ourselves. And may our love be so perfect that it casts out all fear. And help us every day to remember that you are the lion from the tribe of Judah and you walk with us so we need not be afraid. We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Psalm 27:1-5

The Lord is my light and my salvation. Should I fear anyone? The Lord is a fortress protecting my life. Should I be frightened of anything? ²When evildoers come at me trying to eat me up—it's they, my foes and my enemies, who stumble and fall! ³ If an army camps against me, my heart won't be afraid. If war comes up against me, I will continue to trust in this: ⁴ I have asked one thing from the Lord- it's all I seek: to live in the Lord's house all the days of my life, seeing the Lord's beauty and constantly adoring his temple. ⁵ Because he will shelter me in his own dwelling during troubling times; he will hide me in a secret place in his own tent; he will set me up high, safe on a rock.

Leviticus 19:33-34

³³ When immigrants live in your land with you, you must not cheat them. ³⁴ Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.

INTRODUCTION

As humans, we tend to fear those who are different from ourselves. The differences can make us a bit uncomfortable, and that discomfort fueled by our imagination, our perception of the world, our culture and upbringing, the media, religious leaders and politicians, can lead us to be afraid. So how can we overcome the fear of others and see people as God sees them.

One strategy for overcoming fear of the other is to remember that God is your companion, your strength, your stronghold, your light, of whom shall you be afraid. Another strategy to overcome the fear of the other is to live out the teachings of Jesus and love our neighbor as ourselves. Perfect love casts out fears.

QUESTIONS

- 1) In his book “Unafraid”, the Rev. Adam Hamilton talks about a street in Kansas City (Troost Avenue), that marks a dividing line between predominantly white and black communities. When he was growing up, he believed that if he crossed Troost Avenue something bad would happen to him. Growing up, did you have similar fears regarding an area of your community? Where did that fear come from?
- 2) Read Psalm 27:1-5 on page 1. Israelites who prayed and sang this psalm saw Babylon destroy Jerusalem, saw Rome overpower their land—yet they still trusted. What difficulties test your trust, and seek to make you afraid? How can you trust that in the end God will always keep the promise to set you up high, safe on a rock?
- 3) Read Leviticus 19:33-34 on page 1. God told Israel to remember their history as poor immigrants when they were a settled people into whose land others might immigrate. What does this suggest about how God sees people of all nations and races? As God’s follower, how can you live out that same spirit in your attitudes and actions today?
- 4) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached his last Christmas Eve sermon on December 24, 1967. It included these words: “Agape is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return.... This is what Jesus meant when he said, ‘Love your enemies.’ How can you more and more live into the God-given spirit of agape toward whatever frightening people and forces you face, big or small?
- 5) In Luke 9, the Samaritan villagers were rude and unwelcoming. James and John reacted as we are often tempted to. “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to consume them?” they asked. But Jesus said no. Have you ever been in a position either to fan the flames of hatred higher, or to lower the temperature and move toward peace? Which course did you choose?