

FEARLESS

LEADER'S NOTES | WEEK 8

QUESTION 1

The first question is designed to re-familiarize your group with the scripture we are studying this week. Enjoy reading it aloud and then discussing this fascinating scripture.

QUESTION 2

Question two introduces a discussion of fear: fear of change, fear of endings, and, most especially, fear of death. I don't think you need much help with this question because I believe these fears are universally understood. The real value for your group is found in discussing them together.

QUESTION 3

Question three addresses the power and importance of prayer as we face fear. It includes a quote from Dr. David Jeremiah on the power of prayer. This question will give your group the opportunity to discuss how prayer should be our first response, not a last resort.

QUESTION 4

The fourth question focuses on the fear of death, asking your group to contrast how most Americans face it with how they personally deal with the reality of death. The question also quotes the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Denial of Death* by Ernest Becker. You could share with your group that Becker suggests that most people take on what he calls immortality projects. These are things they do to deal with the fear of death. Included in these are what Becker calls apocalyptic romance and tranquilization by the trivial. He claims that people try to stave off the fear of death. People need to make romantic relationships into something ultimate, almost equating them with a religious experience, as if romantic love can save your soul. Tranquilization by the trivial is his explanation of how people seek to get lost in their hobbies and self-interests, somehow hoping to stave off the fear of death. Feel free use these examples in the discussion.

QUESTION 5

The fifth question introduces the solution God gives in **1 John 4:18**, namely, **perfect love casts out fear**. In reality, this verse addresses the fear of death, especially the fear of judgment, or what John calls punishment. Because **"fear involves punishment,"** anyone who still lives in dread of God's wrath indicates that they have not yet reached spiritual maturity in grasping how deep and unconditional God's love is for them. You might also discuss how the word "perfect" in this verse relates to maturity, so another way to understand this idea is that mature love, love that has grown and matured over the years of faithfully following Jesus, is the love that casts out fear. This reminds us that abiding in Christ and growing spiritually allow us greater understanding of God's deep love for us.