

SESSION 1

Quit Being Afraid of What Others Think



(95 MINUTES)

Introduction (1 minute)

We are so glad that you have decided to be a part of this group. We will be exploring themes that are rarely talked about in most Christian discipleship settings but which significantly impact our ability to love God, ourselves, and others well.

The following questions touch on some of the topics covered in this study and will give you an idea of the journey you are about to embark on in becoming a more *emotionally healthy woman*:

- Do you need the approval of others to feel good about yourself?
- When you are angry, sad, or disappointed, do you feel guilty about it?
- Do you believe you don't have choices?
- Do you do for others what they can and should be doing for themselves?
- Do you rarely consider your own hopes and dreams because you are so focused on others?
- Do you say *yes* when you would rather say *no*?
- Do you have difficulty speaking up when you disagree or would prefer something different?
- Are you becoming a *less* loving instead of a *more* loving person?
- Are you resentful and tired because you regularly try to do it all?
- Are you afraid to admit your weaknesses and flaws?
- Do you make assumptions (about people and situations) instead of pursuing the truth?

Growing Connected (19 minutes)

1. Share your name, what you hope to gain from this study, and a few words about something that makes you feel fully alive.

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2. Have someone read aloud the “Suggested Guidelines for the Group” found right before Session 1.

VIDEO: Quit Being Afraid of What Others Think

(17 minutes)

Watch the main video segment for Session 1. Use the space provided to note anything that stands out to you.

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LARGE GROUP: Discussion (30 minutes)

Starters (10 minutes)

Turn to another person and share the following:

3. What part(s) of the video most impacted you?

4. Describe a recent situation when you either avoided saying what you *really* thought or felt, or said *yes* when you really wanted to say *no*.

Bible Study: Exodus 32:1 – 8; 19 – 21 (20 minutes)

Have a volunteer(s) read the introductory paragraph and Scripture passage, and then discuss the questions that follow.

God had already miraculously delivered the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt, but on their journey through the desert, they become nervous when Moses, their leader, was gone for forty days and nights. Upset and desperate, they sought reassurance from Aaron. Read Exodus 32:1 – 8, 19 – 21:

¹ When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

² Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” ³ So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD.” ⁶ So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have

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made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’”

¹⁹ When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

²¹ He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?”

5. Imagine yourself in the scene described in verses 1 – 6. What do you see, hear, and feel?

6. As the sense of anxiety grows among the people during Moses’ long absence, with whom do you most identify?

7. Aaron participated in building the golden calf because of the pressure he felt from the Israelites (see vv. 1, 23). What were the consequences of Aaron fearing what other people would think instead of listening to the voice of God (vv. 6 – 8)?

8. How might Aaron's response have been different if he had not been afraid of what others thought but had instead remained deep and secure in the love of God?

SMALL GROUP: Application (20 minutes)

Form groups of three or four for this application section. Begin by having a volunteer read the following paragraph.

Our lovability — our sense of being good enough — must come from two foundational realities: First, we are infinitely precious and valuable as image bearers of God. Second, Jesus gave up his life for each one of us. Because of these two truths, we don't have to look to any other source for our lovability.

9. Take two minutes on your own to reflect on the statements below. Place a check mark next to any statement with which you identify.

It overly affects my sense of self-worth when . . .

- ☐ I don't have the approval of certain people.
- ☐ I make mistakes or fail.
- ☐ Others criticize me.
- ☐ I don't know more than others.
- ☐ I feel rejected by others.
- ☐ I don't feel needed by others.
- ☐ Others don't see me as responsible, loyal, and dependable.
- ☐ Others don't see me as special and unique.

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- ☐ Others perceive me as weak.
- ☐ I'm in conflict with anyone.
- ☐ People are mad at me.
- ☐ I'm not being productive.
- ☐ My kids are not well behaved.
- ☐ People don't think well of me.
- ☐ Other (fill in the blank) _____
_____.

Now, briefly share your responses with your group.

10. Think over the past week. Can you recall a situation in which your response to someone was rooted more in fear than honesty? (For example, you remained silent, avoided a difficult topic, gave the impression you agreed when you didn't, or lied.)

11. The next time you find yourself in a similar situation, what can you do to slow yourself down and respond thoughtfully and truthfully?

If time allows, briefly pray for one another. Then gather again as a large group.

VIDEO: Frequently Asked Questions (5 minutes)

Watch the Frequently Asked Questions video segment for Session 1. The questions are repeated below, should you want to revisit them later on your own or with a friend or other group member. There is also some space provided for note-taking.

- In some ways, it seems like “to quit being afraid of what others think” could seem cold and unloving. Can you respond to that?
- So much of my life revolves around pleasing other people. How do I get the love of God deep into the center of my being — so that I am free to live out of God’s love?

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Personal Reflection (2 minutes)

Take one minute to still your mind and heart before the Lord and respond to the following question:

What is one thing you learned about God, yourself, or others during this session? Write it down.

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Spend one minute answering the following question:

*What is one step you can take to quit being afraid of what others think?
Write it down.*

Closing Prayer (1 minute)

Use the following prayer or briefly offer your own closing prayer.

Lord, help us to quit living for the approval of others. Grant that we may rest in the freedom and joy that comes from remaining anchored in your love.

Between-Sessions Reading

Before your next meeting, read chapters 1 – 2 (“Quit Being Afraid of What Others Think” and “Quit Lying”) of the book *The Emotionally Healthy Woman*.