

FEAR AND FAITH

HANDOUT

Session 1: Fear of Others

REVIEW

Cheryl's father leaving the family caused her to fear abandonment. What kind of insecurity, tension, or distance can you imagine happened between Cheryl and her husband as a result?

Cheryl's fear also causes her to withdraw in friendships. Have you ever been neglected by someone you know and love? In what ways has that neglect affected your friendship?

Trillia said, "Fear keeps others at arms-length. You can't go deep with others if you don't allow them into your own life." In what ways have you allowed fear to keep you from going deep with others?

Trillia noted that when we pretend we're someone we're not in order to be accepted by them, we're damaging ourselves by not being true to ourselves and hurting others because we judge them. How have you dishonored a friend in this way?

Trillia said when we compare, "we begin the downward spiral into wars and factions instead of loving one another." When have you compared yourself to someone, and it put a wedge between the two of you?

Have you ever thought of comparison in terms of competition? How does competition change the dynamic of friendship? When has competition in friendship damaged your relationship?

Why should someone else's victory be cause for celebration? Why is it more freeing to fight for others rather than competing *against* them?

Ephesians 5:1-2. Do you often let the fact that you are truly, deeply loved by God influence the way you see others? Yourself? Why or why not? What does it mean to "live a life of love, just as Christ loved us?"

Johana's story reminds us of the importance of letting go of the quest for perfection. What keeps you busy? In what ways do you want to be perfect or have the perfect life?

What is the standard of measurement of perfection our world uses? What standard do you use? How does following Jesus change the way we measure ourselves?

How do the different activities you're involved in, relationships you keep, and pressures you face contribute to your fear when it comes to other people?

Matthew 11:28-30. Share a time when God brought you relief and encouragement when you were dealing with multiple pressures and insecurities: What difference did it make?

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BIBLE EXPLORATION

Proverbs 29:25 and Psalm 111:10. What are ways you could begin seeking God's wisdom in the face of fear?

Psalm 77:13, Deuteronomy 4:39, and Isaiah 40:18-31. How do these passages describe God? How do these verses help you reframe the fear and insecurity you battle in your life?

Psalm 62:11-12, John 3:16, and 1 John 4:16. In what ways have you seen your fear diminish in light of God's love for you? If you were to tell a friend about the correlation between God's love for us and fearing less, how would you explain it?

Genesis 1:27 and Psalm 139:1-14. What do these Scriptures say about who *you* are?

As image bearers of God, we are endowed with worth, dignity, and hope. How does knowing this truth help you to truly believe your worth today? What about the worth of others? How have you struggled with people's worth—yourself or others—in the past?

1 Corinthians 12:4-8. We can walk away from the comparison trap by remembering the great diversity of the Body of Christ. Trillia says we can fight our fear of other women through encouragement. What are some ways we can actively encourage our friends?

Galatians 1:10. Write down three ways you've feared someone.

Write down three tangible ways you've experienced God's love in the past week.

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

- **Reading:** Read chapters 1, 3, & 5 from Trillia's book, *Fear and Faith*.
- **Mentoring:** Find time to have a conversation with someone you know who is comfortable and confident and find out how she moved away from fearing others to being settled and at peace.
- **Conversation:** Next time you're hanging out with your girlfriends, ask when they've felt most insecure and why. Seek to find out how your friends grew beyond their insecurities.
- **Memorization:** Memorize Galatians 1:10 for when you're tempted to live for others' approval.
- **Pray:** Ask God to show you one girlfriend to specifically encourage this week. Share with her something you love about her through a text, a written note, or in person.