



## Naked & Afraid: Vulnerable | November 7, 2018

### Discussion Guide

#### The Scoop

What makes you feel most vulnerable? And what do you do to hide it? Read more about how faith and vulnerability interact below.

#### Key Verses

**John 4:18 (NIV)**

*"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."*

### Discussion

In Malcolm Gladwell's podcast, Revisionist History, he takes a look at historical events and asks the question, "What would this look like if it was done differently?" In one episode, he studies the way Elvis performs the song, "Are You Lonesome Tonight." In the song, there's a spoken word portion that Elvis can never perform correctly. Psychologists say that it's because that portion of the song, in particular, causes him to feel vulnerable and exposed. It's personal for him; there's something real about his emotions and relationships behind the lyrics.

1. Why do you think it's so hard for Elvis, one of the greatest performers of all time, to remember that specific portion of the song?
2. Do you ever find yourself getting choked up or feeling frozen when you start to talk about something that makes you feel vulnerable or exposed?

When feeling exposed or vulnerable, humans are prone to protect themselves through something called parapraxis, also known as a Freudian Slip. Without even being fully aware of it, our brain can acknowledge our emotional connection to what we're trying to do and even prevent us from doing it correctly, like remembering the words to a song. We might feel tempted to apologize for it, but what if instead of protecting ourselves from vulnerability, we chose to celebrate it instead?

3. What are the places or situations in your life that make you feel the most vulnerable?
4. Where do you go or what do you do to apologize or hide from this vulnerability?

In John 4:18, we read that there's no reason to fear when we feel exposed or vulnerable. In fact, it goes so far to say that if we fear, we have not experienced the fullness of God's perfect love. When we protect ourselves from being vulnerable, we're actually discounting the love that Jesus showed us when he committed his life for us. In his last moments on Earth, we read about Jesus crying out in desperation before he is crucified. But instead of giving into that fear, he walks right into it, knowing that God's perfect love drives out every fear.

5. Does this picture of Jesus, someone who cries out in desperation just like us, feel personal to you? Can you relate?
6. Have you experienced God's perfect love in the midst of your fear? Talk about the situation and how you chose to lean into that love instead of submitting to the fear.

### What's Next?

Our faith often requires us to step into vulnerable places. If you're not feeling vulnerable or exposed, it may be time to ask God for the opportunity to do so. And in doing so, without fear, we are gifted with experiencing God's perfect love in return.

This week, as you live out your faith, consider what gifts you might be able to provide to those around you when you are vulnerable. Instead of bringing your manicured "perfect" self to the table, show up just as you are. And on the flip side, when someone else shows up in their vulnerability, and they share something deep and feel exposed, extend to them the same love God shows us.