

Reading
with
Leader's
Guide

VINTAGE Saints & Sinners

You are the promise for a more equal world. So my hope for everyone here is that ...you then will lean way in to your career. You will find something you love doing and you will do it with gusto. Find the right career for your and go all the way to the top....I hope you find true meaning, contentment and passion in your life...I hope that you—yes, you—have the ambition to lean in to your career and run the world. Because the world needs you to change it. Women all around the world are counting on you. So please ask yourself: What would I do if I weren't afraid? And then go do it. [Cheryl Sandberg at Barnard's commencement, Lean In, p25-26]

What would you do if you weren't afraid?

What does our culture teach us about fear?

Amanda Berry Smith 1837-1915

- Born into slavery in Maryland in 1837; her family's freedom was purchased by her father
- Married at 17 & widowed at 26, she raised her children alone, working at domestic labor.
- Preached as a holiness evangelist and missionary throughout the U.S., United Kingdom, Africa & India
- Founded an Ohio orphanage for African-American children

From AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: THE STORY OF THE LORD'S DEALINGS WITH MRS. AMANDA SMITH THE COLORED EVANGELIST CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF HER LIFE WORK OF FAITH, AND HER TRAVELS IN AMERICA, ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, INDIA AND AFRICA, AS AN INDEPENDENT MISSIONARY. (1893)

1. I was born at Long Green, Md., Jan. 23rd, 1837. My mother and father lived on adjoining, farm....[My father]} was a strong man, with an excellent constitution, and God wonderfully helped him in his struggle. After he had finished paying for himself, the next was to buy my mother and us children. There were thirteen children in all, of whom only three girls are now living....

How are you like Amanda? How are you different?

2. While I lived in York street I was very sick and could not walk away up to Sullivan Street Bethel Church where I belonged, so I went in [that church] that Sunday. I sat in the gallery. The people were so kind; one brother handed me a book and asked me to come again. I thank God for that spirit that was in Green Street those days, even to colored people. The Sunday I got the blessing I did not sit upstairs, but O, how tired I was when I got into the church. I leaned my head forward and prayed God to give me strength....Then came the text: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

I wanted to shout Glory to Jesus! But Satan said, "Now, if you make a noise they will put you out." I was the only colored person there and I had a very keen sense of propriety; I had been taught so, and Satan knew it. I yielded to the tempter and did not shout. Then I felt the Spirit leave me. I knew He had gone, and I said, "O, Holy Ghost, if Thou wilt only return I will confess Thee."

I knew there was a little jealousy and prejudice among them, so I said, "Well, no matter. I know the Lord has sanctified my soul, anyhow."..."Lord, what shall I do," and a voice seemed to whisper in my left I ear, for Satan stood at my right, and would whisper his suggestions: "Pray for strength to stand up." I took hold of the pew in front of me and trembling from head to foot I stood up, but held on to the pew...

They struck the last verse of the hymn, "Oh! Bear my longing heart to Him, Who bled and died for me. Whose blood now cleanseth from all sin, And gives me victory." And when they sang these words, "Whose blood now cleanseth," O what a wave of glory swept over my soul! I shouted glory to Jesus. Brother Inskip answered, "Amen, Glory to God." O, what a triumph for our King Emmanuel. I

don't know just how I looked, but I felt so wonderfully strange, yet I felt glorious. One of the good official brethren at the door said, as I was passing out, "Well, auntie, how did you like that sermon?" but I could not speak; if I had, I should have shouted, but I simply nodded my head. Just as I put my foot on the top step I seemed to feel a hand, the touch of which I cannot describe. It seemed to press me gently on the top of my head, and I felt something part and roll down and cover me like a great cloak! I felt it distinctly; it was done in a moment, and O what a mighty peace and power took possession of me! (p75-79)

What do you notice in this story? Any phrases/words that caught your attention? Read them out...

What is Amanda afraid of? How does she understand her fear? How does she respond?

Have you ever had a physical experience like this?

3. {After the service} I started up Green street... Just ahead of me were three of the leading sisters in our church. I would sooner have met anybody else than them. I was afraid of them. Well, I don't know why, but they were rather the ones who made you feel that wisdom dwelt with them. They were old leading sisters, and I have found that the colored churches were not the only ones that have these leading consequential sisters in them. Well, as I drew near, I saw them say something to each other, and they looked very dignified. Now, the Devil was not so close to me as before; he seemed to be quite behind me, but he shouted after me, "You will not tell them you are sanctified."

"No," I said, "I will say nothing to them," but when I got up to them I seemed to have special power in my right arm and I was swinging it around, like the boys do sometimes! I don't know why, but O I felt mighty, as I came near those sisters. They said, "Well, Smith, where have you been this morning?"

"The Lord," I said, "has sanctified my soul." And they were speechless! I said no more, but passed on, swinging my arm! I suppose the people thought I was wild, and I was, for God had set me on fire! "O," I thought, "if there was a platform around the world I would be willing to get on it and walk and tell everybody of this sanctifying power of God!"...

Somehow I always had a fear of white people—that is, I was not afraid of them in the sense of doing me harm, or anything of that kind— but a kind of fear because they were white, and were there, and I was black and was here! But that morning on Green street, as I stood on my feet trembling, I heard these words distinctly. They seemed to come from the northeast corner of the church, slowly, but clearly: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28.) I never understood that text before. But now the Holy Ghost had made it clear to me. And as I looked at white people that I had always seemed to be afraid of, now they looked so small. The great mountain had become a mole-hill. "Therefore, if the Son shall make you free, then are you free, indeed." All praise to my victorious Christ! (p.79)

What do you learn about Amanda in this portion of the story?

What is the role of the Devil in her life? How do you understand your own inner messages of discouragement?

What does she add to your thinking about Galatians 3:28?

4. One day I was busy with my work and thinking and communing with Jesus, for I found out that it was not necessary to be a nun or be isolated away off in some deep retirement to have communion with Jesus; but, though your hands are employed in doing your daily business, it is no bar to the soul's communion with Jesus. Many times over my wash-tub and ironing table, and while making my bed and sweeping my house and washing my dishes I have had some of the richest blessings. Oh, how glad I am to know this, and how many mothers' hearts I have cheered when I told them that the blessing of sanctification did not mean isolation from all the natural and legitimate duties of life, as some seem to think. Not at all. It means God in you, supplying all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus; our need of grace and patience and long suffering and forbearance, for we have to learn how not only to bear, but also to forbear with infirmities of ourselves and others as well.

Can you think of anyone you'd like to share this passage with?

What meaning do her words hold for you?

5. It was the third Sunday in November, 1890....I began to examine my work, my life, every day, and I could see nothing. Then I said, "Lord, help me to understand what Thou meanest. I want to hear Thee speak." Brother Gould, then pastor of the Fleet Street Church, took his text. I was sitting with my eyes closed in silent prayer to God, and after he had been preaching about ten minutes, as I opened my eyes, just over his head I seemed to see a



beautiful star, and as I looked at it, it seemed to form into the shape of a large white tulip; and I said, "Lord, is that what you want me to see? If so, what else?" And then I leaned back and closed my eyes. Just then I saw a large letter "G," and I said: "Lord, do you want me to read in Genesis, or in Galatians? Lord, what does this mean?" Just then I saw the letter "O." I said, "Why, that means go." And I said "What else?" And a voice distinctly said to me "Go preach." The voice was so audible that it frightened me for a moment, and I said, "Oh Lord, is that what you wanted me to come here for? ...I arose and got on my knees, and while I was praying these words came to me: "If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." And I said, "Lord, help me and I will."

Have you ever had an experience that was anything like this? How did you respond?

If you saw flaming letters, how would you explain the sight?

6. Brother Holland was to preach in the morning and Brother Cooper in the afternoon. So Brother Holland said, as he was Presiding Elder, I might speak at night and tell my story. "All right," I said....So I stayed that night at Sister Curtis', and she gave me a little breakfast on Sunday morning, but it was mighty skimpy! But I found out that a good deal of praying fills you up pretty well when you cannot get anything else! On Sunday morning we went to Love Feast, and had a good time. Prior to this I had been asking the Lord to give me a message to give when I went to Salem. I said, "Lord, I don't want to go to Salem without a message. And now you are sending me to Salem, give me the message. What shall I say?"

Two or three times I had gone before the Lord with this prayer, and His word was, "It shall be made known to you when you come to the place what you shall say." And I said, "All right, Lord." So I didn't trouble Him any more till this Sunday morning. The Lord helped Brother Holland preach. When he got through preaching and the collection was taken, Brother Cooper made the announcement that I was there; he said, "There is a lady here, Mrs. Amanda Smith" (he had never seen me before or heard of me, and he was a rather jovial kind of a man, and in making this announcement he said, in a half sarcastic and half joking way), "Mrs. Smith is from New York; she says the Lord sent her;" with a kind of toss of the head, which indicated that he did not much believe it. Oh, my heart fell down, and I said, "Oh! Lord, help. Give me the message."

The Lord saw that I had as much as I could stand up under, and He said, "Say, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' " (Acts 9:2). That was the message; the first message the Lord gave me. I trembled from head to foot....

At night after Brother Holland had preached a short sermon, he called me up to exhort. As I sat in the pulpit beside him, he saw I was frightened. He leaned over and said, "Now, my child, you needn't be afraid. Lean on the Lord. He will help you."

And He did help me. There was a large congregation. The gallery was full, and every part of the house was packed. I stood up trembling. The cold chills ran over me. My heart seemed to stand still. Oh, it was a night. But the Lord gave me great liberty in speaking. After I had talked a little while the cold chills stopped, my heart began to beat naturally and all fear was gone, and I seemed to lose sight of everybody and everything but my responsibility to God and my duty to the people. The Holy Ghost fell on the people and we had a wonderful time. Souls were convicted and some converted that night....

Who are the main characters in this part of her story? What roles do they play?

What has Amanda Berry Smith taught you? What will you remember about her?

