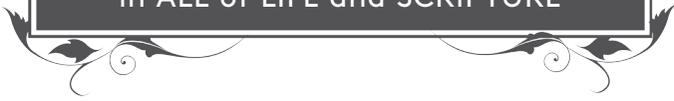


THE JESUS WHO SURPRISES

OPENING OUR EYES to HIS PRESENCE
in ALL of LIFE and SCRIPTURE



DEE BRESTIN

Best-selling author of *The Friendships of Women*



Optional Get-Acquainted Bible Study

1. Go around the group and share your name and an adjective that begins with the same letter your name does (for example, Introverted Ida, Teacher Tom, Dangerous Dee . . .). When it's your turn, say all the adjectives and names of the people who have gone before you as well!
2. Go around again and share something you are passionate about and why.
3. Jesus was always surprising people. Read these passages aloud, taking time to answer the questions as a group after each reading.

Luke 4:16–22

- a. What observations or comments do you have? (Take time with this.)
- b. Why might Jesus's words and actions have surprised people?
- c. Consider what Isaiah says the Messiah would come to do. Have you experienced any of these benefits from Jesus? If so, explain.

Luke 19:1–10

- a. What observations or comments do you have?
- b. Who is surprised by Jesus and why?
- c. What immediate changes do you see in Zacchaeus that suggest he is having a genuine conversion?
- d. Have you ever had a dramatic change in your life due to Jesus? If so, share.

Mark 4:35–41

- a. What observations or comments do you have?
- b. In verse 41, why do you think the disciples are “filled with great fear”?
- c. Have you ever had a moment when you felt great fear of God? If so, what was it like? Why did you feel fear?

4. The God Hunt!¹ We’ll go deeper into this in the book, but let’s get our feet wet. Because Jesus is alive, He is still surprising us today, but we need to learn how to recognize His gifts and His mindfulness of us.

- a. Your most frequent way of spying God will come through realizing that “whatever is good and perfect is a gift . . . from God” (James 1:17, NLT). Let everything—from a perfect peach, to a kind clerk, to a lovely sunset—cause you to stop and thank Him. At the end of each day, record your best gift of the day. What might you say was your best gift yesterday?
- b. In Psalm 8:4, David looks at the heavens and then asks, “What is man that you are mindful of him?” Can you think of a time when you were quite sure God was being mindful of you—and were amazed?
- c. The richest groups are those where people are so hungry for God that they’ve done their homework. What is your plan for accomplishing your homework for this Bible study (when, where, how)?



A Journey of Surprises

And Our Hearts Burned Within Us

The passion children bring to hide-and-seek is the same
passion we need to bring to finding God.

—KAREN MAINS

Bible Study One

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online (Google it) to “Jesus Vindicated” by Tim Keller.

Icebreakers

Skip questions 1 and 3 if you did the Optional Get-Acquainted Bible Study.

1. Go around the group and share your name and an adjective that begins with the same letter your name does (for example, Introverted Ida, Teacher Tom, Dangerous Dee . . .). When it's your turn, say all the adjectives and names of the people who have gone before you as well!
2. Why have you come to this study group, and what do you hope to see happen here?
3. What could you do to help make this discussion group the best it could be?

Week One God Hunt

Each day record your best gift of the day in a sentence: *Today I spied God when . . .* (It could be an encouraging email, a good day at work, the kids going back to school!) At the end of the week, put a star next to your *best* gift of the week to share with others in your group.

Day One: Chapter Review

4. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down one thought that impressed you so you can share it with the group. (Always go around the group with this question, giving freedom to pass.)

5. For those who listened to the Tim Keller sermon, what stood out to you the most about his words?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: The Context of the Walk to Emmaus

Read Luke 24:1–12. (Do this as homework, but when you meet in the group have someone read it aloud and then pause before the questions and ask for comments. God often shows up during these times of looking at the Word together.)

If you were making up this story in the days of Jesus, you wouldn't have women as witnesses. Women were not considered credible witnesses at that time. Yet God values women and had them first at the empty tomb. Luke, who wants to give an orderly account (1:1–4), reports this incident exactly as it happened.

6. What comments or observations do you have after reading or listening to this passage?

7. The word translated “nonsense” or “idle tale” in 24:11 is actually a medical term that Luke the physician uses, meaning “the delirious talk of the very ill.” Why do you think this is the disciples' initial reaction even though the women report exactly what Jesus has said would happen?

8. Did any verse become “radioactive”? In other words, did a verse or phrase send off a powerful charge to you spiritually and cause you to pause? (We'll be considering this question often in our studies, as God so often speaks to us

through our initial, unguarded reaction to something in His Word.) If so, meditate on those words to see what God might be saying to you. What stands out to you as you meditate on them?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: First Look at the Walk to Emmaus

9. As an overview, read Luke 24:13–35 carefully twice and write down any observations, comments, or questions. Did anything become radioactive? Read it aloud again in the group and take turns sharing comments.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: Going Deeper with the Walk to Emmaus

In this retelling of the two disciples meeting Christ while walking to Emmaus, we find humor, pathos, and a deep sense of reality—this truly happened.

10. Read Luke 24:15–24.
 - a. What emotions might the two on the way to Emmaus have had as they were walking? What might they have been talking about?

A Journey of Surprises

b. What emotions might Jesus have had as He walked alongside these two? Why?

c. Why do you think Jesus asks them what happened (verse 19)?

11. Read Luke 24:25–27.

a. What does Jesus say they should have known, and why? Do you believe Jesus is angry with the two for needing Him to teach them? Why or why not?

b. What does He reveal to them about their Scriptures (the Old Testament)?

12. Read Luke 24:28–35.

*a. What might have felt familiar to the two about this scene?

b. How do the two express their emotions after Jesus vanishes from their sight?

- c. It is still night, but what do they do and why?

 - d. What words would you use to describe the scene of the two telling the others that they have seen the risen Lord? What sounds, emotions, exclamations, and questions might have been a part of that moment?

 - e. What does the resurrection of Christ mean to you personally?

 - f. Did any verse in this story become radioactive to you? If so, explain.
- *13. Briefly share a moment in your life when Jesus became particularly real to you, when your heart burned within you, whether at the time of your salvation or another time.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: The Gospel in the Old Testament

Read Luke 24:36–46. With His new, resurrected body, Jesus could simply disappear and appear, and while the eleven were talking, He appears before them, allows them to

touch Him, and eats fish to show He is not a ghost. Then He again turns to the Old Testament—their Scriptures—and shows them how He and His gospel are in it.

14. Describe what happened in this scene.

*15. What three sections of the Old Testament does Jesus open to and explain, according to Luke 24:44? Since the Greek word *zeugma*, translated “all,” means everything from front to back, explain how the three categories represent the whole Old Testament.

16. Not only will you see Jesus foreshadowed in people like Adam, Job, Ruth, David, Esther, and others, but you will also discover the foreshadowing of God’s planned rescue, or the gospel, throughout the Old Testament. How does Jesus explain this in both Luke 24:26 and Luke 24:46?

*17. The term *mysterium tremendum* describes how we feel in the presence of the holy. The two on the road to Emmaus felt it. Have you ever sensed it? If so, when?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Take time to give thanks. You can do this with your eyes open! The facilitator will go around the circle and invite you to share your best God Hunt from the week or one takeaway from the lesson or discussion as a way of thanking God for being personal with you. You also have the freedom to pass. You may want to plan ahead what you will share. If so, write it here:

The God of the Dance

Surprised by Love

It dawned on me for the first time, really. It had dawned on me before, but it really sank in: the Christmas story. . . .
Tears came down my face, and I saw the genius of this. . . .
There must be an incarnation. Love must be made flesh.

—BONO

Bible Study Two



As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Why the Trinity Is So Delightful” by Michael Reeves.

Week Two God Hunt

Continue to record your daily God Hunts of thanksgiving. This week be particularly alert to the power of Christ in your life. In Philippians 3:10, Paul speaks of his longing to “know him and the power of his resurrection.” Brennan Manning calls this “the riseness of Christ” in your life. For example, you might notice evidence of transformation in an area of your life, an answer to prayer in a relationship, or wisdom in a challenging situation at work. Then, at the end of the week, highlight your best God Hunt to share with the group.

6. Read Genesis 1:1–2. How can you see the Father and the Spirit here?

7. Read Genesis 1:26. How can you see the Father and the Son here?

8. Try explaining the Trinity in a few sentences using the metaphor of either a dance or a marriage.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: Love by Its Very Nature Spreads

9. Think about the last time you discovered a great book, restaurant, or movie. Did you want to share this “love”? If so, what did you do?

10. Read 1 John 1:1–4. Describe John’s excitement and desire to share it with others.

11. Who were some of the first people to share Jesus with you? Why do you think they did?

16. When you have moved to a new area, how did you find friends in Christ? Do you have a story of God meeting you during this time?

17. How has God blessed you recently through Christian fellowship? Explain.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: When God's Love Hides

It is exciting when we spy God at work, but other times He seems distant, or even hidden. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus hides His identity from the two for a time. In the book of Job, though God did appear to Job three times, most of the time He is silent.

- *18. What might be some reasons that God would be silent or hide from His child?

- *19. When have you experienced the silence or hiddenness of God? How did you respond, and how do you view this time now, in retrospect?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Made in the image of a triune God, we crave meaningful fellowship. That can happen both in study together and in prayer together, especially when people are willing to be vulnerable in sharing their own needs and in listening carefully to others. Each week your facilitator will lead you in an exercise to help you have a meaningful prayer time together.

If your group is larger than six, cluster in smaller circles. With eyes open, share one God sighting from last week as a way of praising God. After everyone has shared, vocalize one way you *personally* need God's help this coming week. Then bow your heads and one facilitator will lift up names for short sentence prayers.



He Showed Up with a Whip

Surprised by Severity

The first fruit of sin is you are cut off from God and feel trauma in His presence. . . . If you've never felt that, then your comfy God is not the real God, but a god you have created in your mind.

—TIM KELLER

Bible Study Three

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Nakedness and the Holiness of God” by Tim Keller.

Week Three God Hunt

We should always be looking for God to show up when we are with Him in His Word. Each day see if a verse becomes radioactive to you as you read that day’s passage. If it does, slow down to discern what God might be saying to you. Continue also to be aware of His gifts during your everyday routines.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that particularly stood out to you.

2. If you listened to Tim Keller’s sermon, share what stood out to you.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: The Liar and the Wonderful Counselor

3. Read Genesis 3:1–7.

*a. In verse 1, what does Satan’s question to Eve imply about God?
Why do you think Satan wants to make that implication?

b. In verse 3, how does Eve add to what God said? Why do you think she does that?

*c. Think about the last time you sinned and then ask yourself, *What lie did I believe about God that caused me not to trust Him? What need was I trying to meet independently of Him?*

d. In what area of your life are you often tempted? How could you counteract the Enemy by speaking the truth to your soul at the time of temptation? How might you use Scripture? Give an example.

4. Read Genesis 3:8–13.

a. Write down a few things you observed about this passage.

b. Why is Adam's answer to God's first question faulty (see verses 9–10)?

5. In Genesis 3, what are the various ways that Adam and Eve try to hide?

He Showed Up with a Whip

6. Give an example of a time in your life when God convicted you using His Word. (Think of passages on forgiveness, marriage, money, parenting, or love.)

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: The Battle and the Promise

7. Read Genesis 3:14–15.

- a. In verse 15, to whom is God speaking?

- *b. Who do you think is meant by “her offspring”? Why?

- c. Genesis 3:15 mentions a continuing battle between Satan’s offspring and Christ’s offspring. How do you see this battle continuing?

- d. The same word translated “bruise” or “strike” is used in Isaiah 53:5 and is translated “crushed.” What insight does this give you into Genesis 3:15?

- *e. Why do you think verse 15 is called the first gospel?

- *8. How does the Cross make it possible for God to be simultaneously loving and just? Kind and severe? (See 1 Peter 2:24.)

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: Consequences for Woman, Man, and Marriage

9. Read Genesis 3:16.
- a. Whom is God addressing here, and what does He tell her?

 - b. The word *desire* in verse 16 can mean both sexual desire and the desire to control (Genesis 4:7). Some think it is both, and it may be, but since sexual desire was there before the Fall, it seems the predominant emphasis is on control. In 3:16, how do you see strife entering the marriage relationship?

 - *c. How could a husband or wife, through Christ, counteract this effect of the Fall? If you are married, have you experienced this power, this God sighting, in your marriage? If so, share an illustration.

10. Read Genesis 3:17–19.

- a. Adam is with Eve when Satan lied (see Genesis 3:6). How could he have helped? Why do you think he doesn't?

- b. What will happen to the ground, and how will this affect man?

- c. In what ways is your work a curse? In what ways is it a blessing?

- d. What is the final curse for all mankind, according to verse 19?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: One Day!

The last three chapters of Revelation show us a picture of the curse of Genesis 3 reversed, of the new heaven and new earth joined, of Eden redeemed. We will learn more about the new heaven and new earth in part 3 of this book, but for now let's just glimpse how this story will end.

11. Who is the serpent from the garden, according to Revelation 20:2?

12. What is in store for that serpent at the end of the story, according to Revelation 20:10?

13. Read Revelation 21:1–4 and share your comments, observations, and questions.

14. Who will live in this new place of beauty, according to Revelation 21:27?

15. Read Revelation 22:1–2. How is this new heaven and new earth reminiscent of Eden?

16. What is your takeaway this week and why?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

If your group is large, cluster in smaller groups of six or fewer. One of the most effective ways to pray is to use Scripture, for then you are praying within God's will, and He promises to answer those prayers. For example, this week we learned that Satan tries to make us think we can't trust God, so we are tempted to meet our needs independently of God. Look back at your answers under question 3d and formulate a request based on those observations about your own life. If you are willing, tell the group your request, along with any other urgent need you have.



Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Overcoming Our Enemy in This World

The sin underneath all our sins is to trust the lie of the serpent that we cannot trust the love and grace of Christ and must take matters into our own hands.

—MARTIN LUTHER

Bible Study Four



As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Worshiping Idols Without Knowing It,” a twelve-minute interview with Dee Brestin.

Week Four God Hunt

In addition to noticing daily gifts and radioactive verses, be alert so that you can recognize the sin beneath the sin this week. Often our bodies give us clues that an idol is at work: we are tense, angry, anxious, sad . . . At that point, ask yourself, *Why am I downcast [or angry, or nervous . . .]?* *Where am I not trusting God?* Then talk to your soul

about why you *can* trust God—and surrender. If you see progress, give the credit to God in your recordings of “Today I spied God when . . .”

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share at least one with the group.

2. For those who watched the interview with Dee Brestin, do you have comments?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: The Battle with the Second Adam

Tim Keller writes that “[God said to Adam], ‘Obey me about the Tree and I will bless you’—and Adam didn’t do it. But to the second Adam he says, ‘Obey me about the Tree’ [the cross] ‘and I will crush you’—and Jesus does.”⁵

3. Read Matthew 4:1–6.
 - a. According to verse 1, who leads Jesus into the wilderness and why?

 - b. God also tests Israel in the wilderness. Why do you think God does this? (Psalm 66:10 and Hosea 2:15–17 provide a hint.)

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

- c. What is the lie Satan is trying to get Jesus to believe with his first temptation?

 - d. How does Jesus overcome this lie?
-
- 4. Read Luke 22:1–6 and then explain who was behind Judas’s betrayal. What did he hope to accomplish?

 - 5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 and explain how Satan’s plan backfired.

 - 6. Read 1 Corinthians 15:45–49. What promise is here?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: *The Sin Beneath the Sin*

- 7. Think about an area of your life in which you struggle with temptation. Have you tried to just “stop it”? What has been the result?

8. How might you speak the truth about God to your soul and to Satan when you are facing the temptation you identified? Be specific.

9. What insight do the following verses give into why just trying to stop a sin often backfires?

The law code started out as an excellent piece of work. What happened, though, was that sin found a way to pervert the command into a temptation, making a piece of “forbidden fruit” out of it. The law code, instead of being used to guide me, was used to seduce me.

—Romans 7:8–10, MSG

10. Read Exodus 20:1–3.

a. How does God preface the Ten Commandments in verses 1–2? Why do you think that is?

b. How has trusting God brought you out of slavery? Give a specific example of a sin that enslaved you and describe how God has brought or is bringing you out.

- *c. What is the first commandment? Explain why obeying this would help you to obey all the rest. Give one illustration.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: Cain: A Case Study in Idolatry

- *11. All through his first letter, John has been exhorting believers to walk in the light, to walk in love, and to walk in truth. How does he close his letter (5:21)? Why, do you think?

- *12. Read 1 John 3:8–15.
 - a. According to verse 8, if someone makes a practice of sinning, what does it reveal?

 - b. And why, according to verse 9?

 - c. What are two characteristics of the children of the devil, according to verse 10?

d. Why did Cain murder his brother, according to verse 12?

13. Read Genesis 4:1–7.

a. When anything bad comes out of our lives, we can know that a heart idol is operating. In verse 5, what do you see in Cain?

*b. On the basis of verses 3–5, what heart idol might have been operating in Cain? (A heart idol is a need God wants to meet, but because we don't trust Him, we find our own sinful way of trying to meet that need. It could be comfort, control, approval, among others.)

c. What encouragement does God give Cain to let Him fill that need (verse 7)?

d. What does God warn Cain about if he tries to fill his need his own way (verse 7)?

e. Using the word picture in the second sentence of verse 7, how might you speak to your soul the next time you are tempted with one of your besetting sins?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: A Better Blood Than the Blood of Abel

14. Read Genesis 4:8–16.

- a. How does sin overpower Cain in verse 8? What light does 1 John 3:12–15 add?

- b. How do you see God giving Cain a chance to own his sin in Genesis 4:9? And how does Cain respond in that same verse?

- c. What does God tell Cain in verses 10–12? How does this show that God cared about Abel and will be just? Does this help you not to take vengeance into your own hands? Why or why not?

- d. How does Cain show remorse in verses 13–14? How is this different from repentance?

- e. In verse 15, do you see God's mercy toward Cain despite the hardness of his heart?

- f. What happens to Cain in verse 16?
- g. Some people say, “I can’t believe in a God who sends people to hell.”
What insight does this passage give regarding who chooses hell?
15. Read Hebrews 12:22–24. What blood “speaks a better word than the blood of Abel”? What does this mean? (Refer to the close of chapter 4 if you need to.)
Be still before the Lord and let Him search you so that you may confess and truly repent of any known sin.
16. How might you apply this lesson to your life right now?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

If your group is large, cluster in smaller groups of six or fewer. In addition to one personal need you might have, turn your answer to question 7 or 15 into a prayer request. Then the facilitator will lift up each person’s name and you can pray brief sentence prayers. When there is a pause, he or she will lift up the next person’s name. You might get ready by writing your request here.



Religion Versus the Gospel

From Obligation to Grateful Joy

It is not enough to claim Abraham as our father.
The crucial question concerns who our mother is.

—JOHN STOTT

Religion	Gospel
"I obey; therefore, I'm accepted."	"I'm accepted; therefore, I obey."
Motivation is based on fear and insecurity.	Motivation is based on grateful joy.
I obey God in order to get things from God.	I obey God to get God—to delight in and resemble him.
When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.	When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle, but I know all my punishment fell on Jesus and that while God may allow this for my training, he will exercise his Fatherly love within my trial.
When I am criticized, I am furious or devastated, because it is critical that I think of myself as a "good person." Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.	When I am criticized, I struggle, but it is not essential for me to think of myself as a "good person." My identity is not built on my record or my performance but on God's love for me in Christ.
My prayer life consists largely of petition, and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.	My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with God.
My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel humble but not confident—I feel like a failure.	My self-view is not based on my moral achievement. In Christ I am simul iustus et peccator—simultaneously sinful and lost, yet accepted in Christ. I am so bad that he had to die for me, and I am so loved that he was glad to die for me. This leads me to deep humility and confidence at the same time.
My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work, or how moral I am—and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral.	My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for me. I am saved by sheer grace, so I can't look down on those who believe or practice something different from me. Only by grace am I what I am.

Bible Study Five

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “The Prodigal Sons” by Tim Keller.

Week Five God Hunt

This week, be alert to how the gospel can set you free on a daily basis: your identity, your response to criticism or trials, your security concerning God’s love. Continue being alert for other ways of spying God as well and record those God sightings each day.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share one with the group.

2. For those who listened to Tim Keller, what did you learn?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: Religion Versus the Gospel

3. If someone you didn't know well asked you if you were a Christian, would you be offended? Why or why not? How would you respond?
4. Look at the first three items on the Religion Versus the Gospel chart. On which side do you tend to fall?
- *5. Look at the fourth item in the chart concerning when circumstances in your life go wrong. The book of Job shows us a righteous man who suffered greatly—and his three friends were sure it was due to sin. Read 4:6–7 and find the lies of this “religious” man, Eliphaz.
6. All through the book of Job, his friends assume that his suffering is due to sin. How does God make it clear in 42:7–8 that Job's suffering is *not* due to sin?

7. Martin Luther said that “religion” is our default mode. We tend to slip back into it. Looking at the last four items on the chart, where do you tend to slip back into religious thinking?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: Two Sons of Abraham

8. Read John 8:31–38 and find some differences between the religious one and the one the Son has set free.
9. Describe how the argument intensifies in verses 39–47.
10. Read verses 48–58 aloud. What comments and observations do you have?
- *11. According to verses 31–58, how do you think Jesus would contrast the difference between religious identity and gospel identity?

Religion Versus the Gospel

12. Did any of the verses from this week's readings in Job or John become radioactive to you? If so, which one(s) and why?

13. Read Genesis 16:1–4 and describe what happened.

14. Read Genesis 17:15–19 and describe God's promise.

15. Read Galatians 4:21–26 to see how Paul uses this historical story as an allegory. Think in terms of how working independently of God produces barrenness in many ways and how submitting to Him produces fruitfulness.
 - a. According to verse 23, what is the primary difference between the son of the slave woman and the son of the free woman?

 - b. How do religious people try to make themselves right through the flesh? What was the result for Abraham? Sarah? Hagar?

 - c. The Jerusalem of this world is in strife, but the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to be on earth will be filled with children of peace, born of the promise. What is the primary difference between these two cities, according to verses 25–26?

- *d. Explain how religion enslaves but the gospel sets us free. Give one specific illustration, if possible, from your own life.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: Two Ways of Approaching God

Religion always wants to add just a little to the gospel: “Trust Jesus plus _____, then I will be right with God.” The Judaizers tell the Galatians to trust Jesus, plus be circumcised and follow the law, and then they would be approved.

16. Read Galatians 1:6–10.

- a. What is Paul’s tone and message in verses 6–9?

- b. In what ways do you see churches today turning away from the gospel message? Why do you think that is?

- c. According to verse 10, what does religion try to do, and what does the gospel do?

Religion Versus the Gospel

17. Read Genesis 15:1–6.
 - a. What question does Abram ask, and what promise does God give him?

 - b. How does Abram respond?

18. Read Romans 4:1–12 and explain how Paul uses this account of Abraham as an illustration of a gospel-centered response.

19. Read Genesis 16:1–6.
 - a. Who do you think Abram was trying to please here?

 - b. How is this an illustration of the religious response?

 - c. How did this lead to slavery for all of them?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Two Identities

20. In biblical days and (to some degree) today, a woman's identity is often tied to her ability to bear children. That is how she gets approval from man. How does Paul turn this on its head by quoting Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27?

21. When we trust that because of Jesus we are already approved, we may be freed to make choices that are not necessarily valued by the world. Give some examples of this.

22. Have you been freed to do this? Explain.

23. What is your takeaway this week and why?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Using conversational prayer, begin with thanksgiving for ways you sensed Jesus at work in your life this week. Then each person will lift up a personal request of his or her own in prayer and allow the others to lend support with sentence prayers.



The Plotline of the Bible

The Story of the Lamb

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the
sin of the world!

—JOHN 1:29

Bible Study Six



As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “The Story of the Lamb” by Tim Keller and “Is He Worthy?” by Andrew Peterson.

Week Six God Hunt

God helped Madeleine L'Engle write, helps Sally Brestin paint, and helps His children to do His work in the world every day. Be alert to how He helps you to serve Him. And continue to be alert for other ways you spy Him, recording those moments below under “Today I spied God when . . .”

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share one with the group.

The Plotline of the Bible

2. If you listened to “The Story of the Lamb” by Tim Keller, what do you remember and why?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: The Purpose of Testing and Trying Our Hearts

3. Read 1 Peter 1:3–9 aloud and share your comments and observations.
4. Can you think of a believer, in your small group or in your life, who faced a trial with trust? How did that impact you?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:7–12 aloud and share your comments and observations.
6. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16–18 and explain what will help us overcome trials.
7. Have you faced a trial that helped you know your faith was genuine? If so, explain.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: Father, Where Is the Lamb?

8. Read Genesis 22:1: “After these things God tested Abraham.” What had happened in 21:8–14 that would increase the severity of this test?

9. Read Genesis 22:1–5 aloud.
 - a. Share your comments and observations.

 - b. What does God ask of Abraham in verse 2, and how is this verse a foreshadowing of what God would ask of Himself?

 - c. How does Abraham respond in verse 3?

 - d. What is the significance of “the third day” (verse 4)?

 - e. What does verse 5 reveal about Abraham’s thinking? How is this supported by Hebrews 11:17–19? What comments do you have on his faith?

10. Read Genesis 22:6–19.

a. Who carried the wood up the mountain for the sacrifice in verse 6? Compare this to John 19:16–17. What do you see?

b. What question does Isaac ask, and how does Abraham answer in Genesis 22:7–8? How was this a prophetic answer (verse 13)?

c. What does Abraham name the place (verse 14)?

d. Describe a time when God provided for you.

11. Do you think that in our culture the family's and the community's health take a back seat to individual freedom? If so, how? How should we respond as believers?

Today I spied God when . . .

The Plotline of the Bible

14. Read Matthew 26:26–29 aloud.
 - a. Share your comments and observations.
 - b. Describe what Jesus says at this Passover remembrance.
 - c. Matthew does not tell us how the disciples react. What do you imagine they are thinking?
 - d. Why is this now the ceremony we are to keep?
15. Read John 19:32–36 and find the parallel with the Passover lamb in Exodus 12:46.
16. Read Matthew 27:45–46 and find the parallel with the Passover lamb in Exodus 12:6.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Reading the Bible with the Spectacles of the Gospel

17. As you review what we've covered from the books of Moses, what are some ways you saw the gospel foreshadowed?

18. What are some ways you saw Jesus foreshadowed?

19. Does this strengthen your faith in the validity of Scripture? Why or why not?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Rather than giving prayer requests, with eyes open but still praying, begin by giving thanks for some of the tender mercies you recorded this week. Then, when there is a pause, each person will share his or her personal request and allow the request to be supported by a few sentences from others. When there is another pause, another person should share a request, and so on.



The Surprising Way to Pray

Authenticity as the Path to Intimacy with God

If You won't give me back my wife, give me peace! Give me peace! . . . I'm confused! I'm mad! I love You, Lord, I love You, but I am mad at You! I am mad at You!

—SONNY, praying in the movie *The Apostle*

Bible Study Seven

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Praying Our Tears” by Tim Keller.

Week Seven God Hunt

This week you will be practicing authenticity in your prayer life. When you lament, remember to listen, for lament can open up a dialogue with God. Be still and see if He gives you comfort or wisdom or reminds you of His character. Record these things in your “Today I spied God when . . .” notes.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share at least one with the group.

2. If you listened to “Praying Our Tears,” what do you remember?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: Psalm 13, a Model of a Lament

The classic lament has three parts: (1) an honest expression of feelings, (2) a turn, where the psalmist remembers God’s character, and (3) a resolve to trust God amid difficult circumstances.

The Surprising Way to Pray

3. Read Psalm 13 and see if you can identify the three parts of this lament with verse numbers:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

4. Now try this with a lament of your own. Honestly express your feelings about a problem in your life, stop and listen, and then resolve to trust God. (You may or may not wish to share this with the group, but be authentic with God.)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: The First Lamentor: Job

God allowed Satan to sift Job, for God knew Job would come forth like gold and show sufferers in the future *how* to lament to stay close to God and receive wisdom. Prepare your heart for today's study by listening to Nicole Mullen sing "My Redeemer Lives" on YouTube.

5. Describe Job's lament in Job 14:1–6. How honest is he with God?

6. Find Job's question to God in verse 4. What does he think the answer is?

7. Read verses 7–14.
 - a. Why does Job think a tree is better off than a man?

 - b. What question does Job ask in verses 10 and 14?

 - c. What wish is expressed in verse 13?

- *8. During the time of the Old Testament, the afterworld was shadowy, and believers were not confident of heaven. Job does receive an answer, but it is a bit hard to see. Job's question, which you noted above, is "If a man dies, shall he live again?" Then, God's Spirit gives Job the answer, showing him to "wait"

14. Job was relatively innocent and suffered almost unto death. His friends failed to comfort him, and indeed Job felt forsaken even by God. In what ways can you see Jesus as being “the greater Job”?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Psalm 126, in Joy or in Sorrow

15. Read aloud Psalm 126. What do you notice most about this psalm?
16. Psalm 126 takes place in a time of great trouble, though we do not know what it is. But the psalmist begins his prayer time not with a lament or a supplication but with remembering a time of great faithfulness in the past. How does he describe it in verses 1–3? Why do you think he does this?
17. What does the psalmist ask of God in verse 4, and what metaphor does he use? (The Negev/Negeb is a dry desert area with a “wadi,” a dry riverbed that wells up and flows with water when the torrential rains come.)



The Surprising Fruit of Suffering

Fullness of Joy

It's not that your heart isn't going to break; it's how you
let the brokenness be made into abundance afterward.

—ANN VOSKAMP

The Surprising Fruit of Suffering

show us how to respond so that we might experience growth and fullness of joy. Spiritual growth requires two steps: something must be recognized and removed, and something must, by faith, replace what has been removed.

3. Read Ezekiel 36:25–27.

- a. What makes us unclean, or to put it another way, what is the sin beneath our sin, according to verse 25?

- b. The sprinkling of clean water is a metaphor for the cleansing of God when we repent of our idols. To recognize and repent from an idol, ask yourself, *In what area do I tend to yield to temptation? What need am I trying to fulfill for myself that God could fill? What false identity am I clinging to other than being a beloved child of God?*

- *c. Jesus alludes to this passage from Ezekiel in John 3:5. What insight does this give you into what He tells Nicodemus?

- d. The second part of the process of growth is described in Ezekiel 36:26–27. Idols cannot be removed but only replaced. With what do we need to allow God to replace them, according to this passage?

4. Let's look at how to apply Ezekiel 36:25–27 to our lives. For instance, the next time you are lying awake during the night, worrying about something, how could you use the gospel and remembrance of God's faithfulness in the past to speak the truth to your soul? Be specific regarding the words you would use.

5. Many of us have a habit of getting angry when things don't go our way. We might honk unnecessarily at someone on the road or even throw something. This might be because of a control idol or because we believe a false identity about ourselves, such as we need to be perfect to be loved. How might we repent and speak to our souls in those cases?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: The Sorrows of Those Who Run After Another God

We love our heart idols and we don't want to let them go, so the psalmist helps us see the truth so that we might be strengthened to truly repent and trust.

6. Read Psalm 16:1–5.
 - a. Of what does David remind himself in verses 2–3? How does this inspire confidence in God?

The Surprising Fruit of Suffering

- b. According to verse 4, what happens to those who run after another god?

- c. Share a personal example of your running after “another god,” or rebelling against God’s way, and experiencing multiplied “sorrows.” It doesn’t have to be choosing something bad. We create idols out of good things, such as friendship and ministry, when we find our identity or security in them.

- d. What happens, according to verses 5–6, to the person who makes the Lord his chosen portion and cup?

- e. The tribe of Levi, or the priests of Israel, were given no land like the others to remind them that the Lord was their inheritance. How could this help you as you ponder financial losses or decisions?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: How Sorrow Can Produce Joy in a Believer’s Heart

7. Read Psalm 16:7–11.

- a. What does God give David (verse 7)?

- b. Hebrews tells us that God is going to shake our world. But what will happen if we set the Lord always before us, according to Psalm 16:8?

- c. Sometimes the shaking of our world causes us to realize the futility of our idols. The only One who will never let us down, move away, or die is the Lord. Describe a time you experienced a shaking of your world that helped you to press into God and experience joy.

- d. How do you see joy in the psalmist in verse 9?

- e. How does verse 10 show you we are no longer talking about David?

- f. What three joys await us if we make the Lord our refuge, according to verse 11?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Cut to the Heart

Peter and Paul both turn to Psalm 16 to explain the gospel in their first sermons. They show us how Jesus is hidden in the psalm, and the response of their listeners illustrates what is necessary for spiritual growth.

The Surprising Fruit of Suffering

8. Read Acts 2:22–36.
 - a. What does Peter tell the crowd in verses 22–24?

 - b. In verses 25–28, Peter quotes Psalm 16. To whom does he say it refers and why?

9. Read Acts 2:37–41.
 - a. Remembering Ezekiel, what first step of growth do you observe in the listeners?

 - b. How do you see the second step of growth promised and received?

10. Jesus tells Nicodemus, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Jesus is alluding to Ezekiel, offering a picture of what happens to one who repents and trusts Christ. Have you been born again? If so, share in a sentence on what basis you believe you are in the kingdom of God.

11. What is your takeaway from this week and why?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Take turns speaking a heart idol out loud, with others supporting each individual with sentence prayers.

Our Secret Weapon

Learning from the Psalms How to Pray

Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?

—D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

Bible Study Nine

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to the Fuller Studio recording of Eugene Peterson and Bono discussing the Psalms.

Week Nine God Hunt

Learning to dialogue with God using the psalms and then being still before Him can help you hear from Him—He gives songs in the night, wisdom, and peace. Develop this habit and share below any ways you spy God as you pray Scripture or speak to your soul.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share one with the group.

2. If you listened to Eugene Peterson and Bono, what stood out to you?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: Speaking to Your Soul

3. Read Psalm 119:49–50. In this passage, what is the psalmist asking God to do and why?

4. If you listen to your soul in an area about something that concerns you, what might your soul say that would *increase* your anxiety? What are some promises from God's Word that you could speak to your soul to calm her?

5. Read Psalm 42 through and find the repeated refrain.
 - a. What question is the psalmist asking of his soul, and what exhortation is he giving to his soul?
 - b. The psalmist begins by using two water images to describe his despair. The first is in verse 1, of a deer *panting* for water but (on the basis of verse 2) not finding it. Using your sanctified imagination, describe a possible scenario for this deer and what the deer might be experiencing. Then share what insight this gives you into what the psalmist might be feeling.
 - c. What is the only water the psalmist is experiencing, according to verse 3?
 - d. Common symptoms of depression are not sleeping, not eating, continual crying, and feeling isolated. Find references to all of these in verses 3–4.
 - e. In verses 5–6, though the psalmist seems to be isolated on a mountain, he remembers better days and speaks about them to his soul. What does he tell his soul? Is speaking to your soul a new concept for you?

Our Secret Weapon

- *f. The psalmist now moves to two more water images that are simultaneously negative and positive. Describe these two water images found in verse 7.

- *g. Compare this to Jonah 2:3. What insight does this give you into what the psalmist is feeling?

- h. Read Psalm 42:8 and find what consoles the psalmist. Who is behind these waves, and how does that sustain the psalmist in the midst of terror?

- i. How is verse 8 a comfort in your times of distress?

- j. How can you see Jesus in verses 9–10? How might this comfort you in your trials?

- k. In verse 11, the psalmist's soul spasms again, so what does he keep doing? (See also Psalm 43:5.)

Today I spied God when . . .

Our Secret Weapon

12. According to Isaiah 57:1, is it ever God's plan for the righteous to die young?
If so, why?

13. How did Psalm 103:17–18 cause Steve to pray? How was he sowing his tears?
How are those tears reaping a harvest?

14. When you realize the frailty of this earthly life and the vast domain of eternity,
how might that help you speak to your soul about transitory troubles? Give an
example.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Jesus Bled Scripture

Not only does Psalm 22 prophesy the atrocities Jesus would bear at the cross, but Jesus Himself quotes it at His moment of deepest agony. The suffering we see in this psalm, and which Jesus fulfills, should help us to speak clearly to our souls when the Enemy is telling us God does not love us.

15. Read verses 1–2. How does David begin his lament?

16. How can you see Jesus in verse 1? (See also Matthew 27:46.)

17. Why does God the Father turn His face away from His Son? (See Habakkuk 1:13.)

18. How can you see Jesus in Psalm 22:6–8?

19. How can you see Him in verses 12–15? How do we know this is only Christ now and not David?

20. How can you see Jesus in verses 16–18?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Begin your prayer time with thanksgiving, using your God Hunt discoveries or Psalm 22:19–31 to help you. Then each person takes a turn voicing a fear or particular anxiety, with others speaking the promises of God or prayers of petition. For example:

Tom: I am anxious about my finances.

Mark: Lord, please give Tom peace that You are his Provider.

Susan: Yes, Lord.

Sandy: I am anxious about so many things, I can't even name them!

Tom: Father, may Sandy stay her mind on You and find the rest You promise.

Susan: Yes, Lord, please give her Your perfect peace.



A Royal Wedding Song

*When You Give Your Heart,
You Need Not Fear*

To find him I had to let go of me. Or rather, let go of the
me I had designed so carefully over the years.

—SARA HAGERTY

Bible Study Ten



As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on The Jesus Who Surprises under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Enjoying Christ Constantly” by Mike Reeves.

Week Ten God Hunt

This week look for and record a “kiss from the King”: an unexpected encounter that makes you suspect God is behind it, a verse or idea that you hear several times from different sources, an answer to prayer, or His peace despite circumstances.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share one with the group.

2. If you listened to “Enjoying Christ Constantly” by Mike Reeves, what do you remember?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: My Heart Is Stirred

3. Read Psalm 45 in its entirety for an overview.
 - a. How would you summarize the theme of this psalm in a sentence?
 - b. Did any verses become radioactive to you? If so, why?
- *4. In verse 1, we’re given some insight into how holy men inspired by God wrote the Scriptures. What do you see?
5. Read Hebrews 1:8–9, where Psalm 45 is quoted. Who does the author of Hebrews say this psalm describes?

Today I spied God when . . .

c. Revelation 19:11–16

10. Read Psalm 45:1–9.

- a. In verse 1, the psalmist says he is addressing verses to his king. What does he call this king in verses 6–7?

- b. How long will this new and coming kingdom last, and what do you learn about it from this passage?

- c. In Song of Songs 3:6, the bridegroom is perfumed with frankincense and myrrh. What similarity do you see in Psalm 45:8? Since myrrh is associated with death, what significance do you see in this bridegroom's fragrance?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: All Glorious Is the Bride

11. Read Psalm 45:10–12.

- a. Do any verses stand out to you? If so, why?

A Royal Wedding Song

b. In the Song of Songs, the bride is called a “noble daughter” (7:1). How do you also see her described as royalty in Psalm 45:10–15?

*c. What does the bridegroom ask her to do in response to him in verse 10? What do you think this means and why?

d. In what ways have you, by faith, died to yourself or to this world in order to glorify your King?

12. Psalm 45:13–15 describes the bride. In verse 13, some translations speak of “her chamber,” but actually that phrase is not there in the Hebrew. The New American Standard Bible (NASB) offers a more accurate translation of this verse: “The King’s daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is interwoven with gold.” Puritan Jonathan Edwards felt the plainest meaning is that just as the bride’s clothing was beautiful, so the parts of her body hidden by her clothing were beautiful. Repeatedly Scripture affirms the beauty of the marriage bed. On an earthly level, both love songs in Scripture (the Song of Songs and Psalm 45) also affirm this. What do you learn from the following about how God views sex as He created it to be?

a. Hebrews 13:4

b. Proverbs 5:15–23

c. Song of Songs 4:9–16

d. Psalm 45:13

13. How does God's view of the marriage bed impact you personally?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Oh Glorious Day

Today we will ponder this most intimate of metaphors and the closing of Psalm 45.

14. The love song of Psalm 45, the Song of Songs, Revelation, the parables, and the prophets all liken our relationship to Christ as a bride to her husband. On a spiritual level, write how each of the following metaphors for God escalate in intimacy: Shepherd, Friend, Father, and Bridegroom. (Lucy, in her testimony, answers this!)

18. What is your takeaway for this week and why?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Spend time in both praise and petition. Divide into small groups if your group is large.



Holy, Holy, Holy

First, We Must Be Undone

If ever there was a man of integrity, it was Isaiah ben Amoz. . . . Then he caught one sudden glimpse of a holy God. In that single moment, all of his self-esteem was shattered. In a brief second he was exposed, made naked beneath the gaze of the absolute standard of holiness.

—R. C. SPROUL

Bible Study Eleven

Your facilitator may divide this study into two weeks. As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “The Trauma of Holiness” by R. C. Sproul.

Week Eleven God Hunt

Be alert this week for unexpected grace or timing. For example, you got a warning instead of a ticket; you ran into a friend you’d just been thinking about; you prayed to find lost keys—and there they were! Write down each day these or any other ways you spy God this week.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share at least one with the group.
2. If you listened to R. C. Sproul’s talk “The Trauma of Holiness,” share your thoughts here.
3. When Jesus begins His ministry, He opens the scroll to Isaiah’s prophecy about the coming Messiah, reads it, and then proclaims, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Read Isaiah 61:1–2 and answer the following:
 - a. Why do you think Jesus’s words are so surprising to the people in the synagogue?

Holy, Holy, Holy

b. How has Jesus been any of these things to you recently? Share specifically.

*c. When Jesus reads from Isaiah, He stops in the middle of a sentence. Look in Isaiah 61 and see what He does not read. What is it, and why do you think He stops?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: Isaiah's Commission

4. Describe the scene and the message of the seraphim in Isaiah 6:1–4.

5. The shaking of the earth is a customary reaction to the Lord's presence. (For example, see Exodus 19:18 and Habakkuk 3:3–10.) How did the earth react in Matthew 27:51–54? Why?

6. How does Isaiah respond in Isaiah 6:5? Why do you think that is?

*7. Jesus says, "Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). What do the things you talk about reveal about your heart, including any sin in your heart?

- *8. How does God show and speak mercy to Isaiah in Isaiah 6:6–7? How do you see the gospel here?
9. Have you ever experienced a sense of “trauma” due to the holiness of God? Have you then also experienced relief? Explain.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: God’s Children in Court

10. Read Isaiah 1:1–3.
- a. Who are God’s witnesses, according to verse 2?
 - b. When God the Judge looks down from His courtroom bench, whom does He see? Why is this so painful?
 - c. What do even stubborn animals know that God’s people do not?
11. Read 1 John 3:9. What does John tell us?

Holy, Holy, Holy

12. Because we have “God’s seed” (1 John 3:9) in us, we have the power to choose the path of privilege. Yet Isaiah says God’s children are choosing the path of sin. In other words, we sin because we want to. When we do, what lie are we believing?

13. God charges His people first with iniquity, or rebelling against God’s straight line.
 - a. According to Romans 1:18–20, why is God angry with man?

 - *b. God has put His law in every man’s heart, for even Abraham, who did not have the law, knew what was right. How do you see this sense of “oughtness” in people’s hearts, even if they don’t know the Bible? How do you see it in your own heart?

14. Read Isaiah 1:4–9.
 - a. What metaphors does God use in verse 6 to show the extent of His people’s iniquity?

 - b. Where do you tend to rebel against the straight line of God?

15. Read verses 10–17. Why is the people’s religion a burden to God? What evidences of insincerity does He see? (For those who wish to go deeper, Isaiah expands on this in Isaiah 58.)

16. Read verse 18 aloud. How does this verse show both the bad news and the good news of the gospel?

17. Read verses 21–23.
 - a. How has individual sin spread to affect the whole community?

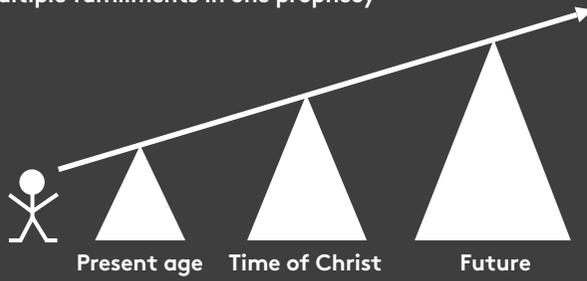
 - b. Why is it that sin, even when done behind closed doors, always affects others?

 - c. Think about a way you sinned that ended up hurting others, though that was not your intention. (You don’t have to share, but consider.)

Today I spied God when . . .

Mountain Peaks of Prophecy

Multiple fulfillments in one prophecy



20. Isaiah gives hope to the people of God concerning a near deliverer and a far deliverer.
- a. Who does Isaiah 45:1 say will one day free the Jews? What was unusual about this conqueror yet to be born, according to verse 4?

 - b. Who is the ultimate Deliverer, and what do you learn about Him in Isaiah 9:6–7?

 - c. Take one of the above names of Jesus and comment on it. Has He been any of these things to you? If so, explain.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: By the Waters of Babylon

Psalm 137 shows that Isaiah's predictions about Babylon were fulfilled. To prepare your hearts for today, look up Jason Silver singing Psalm 137 on YouTube.

21. What comments do you have on Silver's presentation of Psalm 137?

22. Read verses 1–3 and describe the scene.

23. Read verses 4–6. What evidence of repentance do you see?

24. Read verses 7–9. Describe what the Babylonians did to the Israelites and also what the Israelites ask God to do to the Babylonians.

25. Psalm 137 is both a lamentation and an imprecatory psalm, in which God's people ask God to avenge their enemies. Can you identify with those feelings? What does Romans 12:19 tell us to do with these feelings?

26. Derek Kidner exhorts us to distill the essence of an imprecatory psalm and receive the impact of it so that we might empathize rather than give smooth answers in the face of such pain. But *our* response to cruelty should be to pray for reconciliation, not judgment.⁸ What comments do you have on this? Do you believe it is ever appropriate to pray for judgment on an enemy? Why or why not?

27. What is your takeaway this week and why?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Cluster in groups of three or four. Using the words of Isaiah 9:6–7, begin with praise. Then, if you are willing, confess sin, either audibly or silently (though James 5:16 encourages us to do it audibly). Then the facilitator will lift up the name of each person and others will support that person.



Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye, My People

The Songs of the Servant

In Isaiah 53, “we find ourselves in the presence of love beyond anything known on earth, and the voice which says, ‘I was delighted when my Son died for you—and I am still delighted.’”

—J. ALEC MOTYER

Bible Study Twelve

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Can a Mother Forget?” by Tim Keller.

Week Twelve God Hunt

Be still this week and know that He is God. Be open to hearing from Him after studying Scripture or asking for wisdom or comfort. Be alert. Also be aware of the many other ways you may spy Him. Write down your sightings each day.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read the chapter and highlight as you read. Write down two thoughts that impressed you and share at least one with the group.

2. If you listened to Tim Keller’s “Can a Mother Forget?” share what stood out to you.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: Flashes of Light

Although there is much doom and gloom in the first two-thirds of Isaiah, God always provides flashes of light to give His people hope. Babylon was a real nation that took Israel captive and made them slaves, but Babylon also symbolizes Satan and how he still ensnares God’s children and makes them slaves. These flashes of hope, therefore, were

not just for ancient Israel but also for us. Isaiah 9 tells of a reversal of fortune, and the verbs are in the past tense, for the future is a sure hope, as if it had already happened.

3. Read Isaiah 9:1–3 and describe the reversal of fortune Isaiah sees.

4. Read verses 6–7 aloud and note anything that stands out to you about the One who will reverse this fortune.

5. We will learn much more about heaven next week, but in Isaiah 11:6–10, we get a glimpse of what it will be like. What do you learn from these verses?

6. What else do you see about heaven in Isaiah 25:6–10?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: Word Pictures to Comfort Your Soul

Go to YouTube and see the flash mob singing the “Hallelujah Chorus” (search for “Hallelujah flash mob food court”).

7. Have you experienced Handel’s *Messiah* in any way? If so, share how it has impacted you.

8. Read Isaiah 40:1–2.

- a. What stands out to you and why?

- b. The firstborn son received a double portion of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17; Isaiah 61:7). Here in Isaiah 40:2, what has Israel received as the firstborn son? Why might children of God be disciplined more severely than children of the devil?

9. Read Isaiah 42:1–4 (a bruised reed).

- a. What do you learn about the first coming of Jesus from these verses?

- b. What do the word pictures of verse 3 express?

- c. How have you experienced His gentleness recently? (God Hunt!)

- d. The word *bruised* is the same word that is used in Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 53:5 (though it is translated “crushed”). What does this show us about how Christ is able to come to us, as sinners, gently?

10. Read Isaiah 49:15–16 (a mother’s love).

a. What word picture is in verse 16, and how is this meaningful to you?

*b. What does it mean to be “engraved” on the palms of Christ’s hands?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: The Heart of Our Savior

11. Read Isaiah 50:4–7 (his face like flint).

a. In verses 4–5, you can see the relationship that God the Son had with God the Father. Unlike the first Adam, who did not heed his Father’s voice, this second Adam does. He models for us what it means to be a true disciple. What do you learn about Him in these verses?

b. Describe the mind-set of Christ reflected in verses 6–7.

- c. In the chapter, the author gave Jane Eyre as an example of standing firm despite the sacrifice demanded. Like Jesus, she was setting her face like flint. Where do you sense God asking you to stand firm, to set your face like flint today?
12. Read Isaiah 52:13–15. Why were people shocked at the appearance of Jesus on the cross?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Five: Isaiah 53, the Golden Chapter of the Old Testament

We are approaching holy ground, so imitate the attitude of Moses and take off your shoes (Exodus 3:5).

13. Read Isaiah 53:1–3.
- a. What question is asked in verse 1?
 - b. What evidence supports the statement given in verses 2–3?
 - c. Why do you think people rejected Christ in His day? In our day?

Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye, My People

14. Read verses 4–6 aloud, and then comment on whatever becomes radioactive to you and explain why.

15. Do the same with verses 7–9.

16. Do the same with verses 10–12.

17. Looking over Isaiah 52:13–53:12, find as many prophecies as you can that have been fulfilled.

18. Meditate on Isaiah 53:11: “Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied.” What do you think Christ saw that satisfied Him? (Reading Isaiah 62:4–5 may help.) What does this mean to you?

19. What comfort have you found in this week’s lessons?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

In small groups, begin with praise, using Isaiah 53. Then lift up your own request and allow others to support you.



Homesick No More

The Best Is Yet to Come

“I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. . . . Come further up, come further in!”

—the UNICORN, in *The Last Battle*

Bible Study Thirteen

As a group, view the related video and share comments: go to deebrestin.com and click on *The Jesus Who Surprises* under Free Teaching Videos. Also, as an option for going deeper, listen online to “Isaiah 65” by Eric Alexander. And a perfect closing for this study is the video “Is He Worthy?” by Andrew Peterson.

Week Thirteen God Hunt

Jerram Barrs, professor at Covenant Seminary, uses the phrase *echoes of Eden*, meaning something you see, hear, or experience that reminds you of what the world was like before it all went wrong. You may come upon it in the arts, nature, or even the kindness of strangers. Be alert and list any echoes of Eden in your God Hunts this week.

Day One: Chapter Review

1. Read and highlight the chapter. What are two thoughts that impressed you?

2. If you listened to Eric Alexander, please share your comments here.

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Two: A Tale of Two Cities

Revelation can seem quite strange if you start there, so let's instead review the threads, beginning with a tale of two cities: Babylon and Jerusalem.

3. Read Genesis 11:1–9 and explain *why* the people made a tower. What lie were they believing?

4. Review Psalm 137 and describe the pain of God's people as captives in Babylon.

5. What pain have you experienced because of bondage to sin and to Satan? If you are being delivered in certain areas, share that, too.

6. Read Revelation 18:2. What understanding do you now have of this verse?

7. Read Revelation 21:1–4. What understanding do you now have of this passage?

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Three: The Lamb and the Bride and Bridegroom

8. Review Genesis 22:7–8. What question does Isaac ask, and how does Abraham answer? What does this story foreshadow?

9. Read Isaiah 53:4–7. How was Jesus to be like a lamb?

10. Read Revelation 19:6–8 and explain this passage in light of what you've learned about the Lamb.

11. What was Adam's reaction when God brought Eve to him in Genesis 2:23? What comparison does Isaiah 62:3–5 make?

12. What common thread can you trace through the following passages? Also, share any way this impacts you.
 - a. Song of Songs 6:3

 - b. Hosea 2:23

 - c. Isaiah 65:17–19

 - d. Revelation 21:1–4

Today I spied God when . . .

Day Four: All Things New (Part 1)

To prepare your heart for today, watch the YouTube video called “Is He Worthy?” by Andrew Peterson.

13. What do you remember from the chapter about the following:
 - a. What does the Greek word *palingenesia* mean?
 - b. How is spring a mini preview of the palingenesia?
 - c. What does C. S. Lewis say we should learn when our dreams in this world disappoint?
 - d. Why don't we need a bucket list? (Or do you think we do? If so, why?)
14. Read Matthew 19:28–29. How does Jesus speak of the palingenesia, and what do you learn from His words?
15. Read Isaiah 65:17–20 aloud and share any meditations on it.
16. Read Isaiah 65:17–20 again.

Day Five: All Things New (Part 2)

19. Read Isaiah 54:1–8 and share your meditations. Also share how this passage could be a comfort to those deprived of marriage or parenting in this life.

20. Read Isaiah 65:23–25 and share your meditations.

21. Read Isaiah 65:23–25 again.
 - a. What promise do you find in verse 23, and what might this mean to you or someone you love who has lost children or seen them suffer?

 - b. What do you think verse 24 tells us about the new heaven and new earth?

 - c. What do you learn about animals in the palingenesia?

 - d. What does “dust shall be the serpent’s food” refer to, do you think?

22. In a few sentences, how would you describe heaven to another person, based on Scripture?

23. Review:

- a. Share two things you want to remember from part 1: “How the Story Began: The Books of Moses.”

- b. Share two things you want to remember from part 2: “How to Live in the Story: The Psalms.”

- c. Share two things you want to remember from part 3: “How the Story Will End: The Prophets.”

24. How has Jesus surprised you through this book and Bible study? How have you been changed?

Today I spied God when . . .

Prayer Time

Begin with thanksgiving for promises you have discovered or truths you have learned over the past few weeks. Then take time to bless one another with eyes open and looking at one another. The facilitator will lift up each person, and then a few others will share a blessing or affirmation over that individual. Then go to the next.



Hints for Group Facilitators

Inviting Others to This Study

In an email inviting people to this study, link to a promotional video for this book, available on Amazon and at the Dee Brestin Ministries website.

Optional Teaching Videos

Excellent short videos—under fifteen minutes for each chapter—feature teaching from Dee and testimonies from women who did this study. These are also found at Dee's website and on DVDs online. You can show these before each discussion (preferable) or assign them as part of the homework by linking to the applicable web page.

The Role of a Facilitator

A facilitator is not a teacher but a tool of the Holy Spirit to help group members discover truths together by looking into the Word and sharing what God is showing them. Here are some ideas to help you in this important role:

- Place the chairs in as small a circle as possible, because space inhibits sharing.
- Homework is important, so set the standard high. Pray for members during the week, and expect homework to be done between each group gathering.
- If some members in the group were not able to get their book ahead of time, do the get-acquainted lesson at the first meeting.
- Begin each week by showing the short introductory video (if you are opting to use the videos).
- Begin the discussion by going around the circle and asking members to share, briefly, their very best God Hunt of the week. This is a great

icebreaker, and icebreakers really do help a group warm up and get comfortable. Skipping them is a mistake!

- There is great value in reading the scriptural text aloud and allowing time for comments before you dive into the questions.
- Each week's study has more questions than you will have time to answer together. Circle ahead of time the questions that lead to more discussion and assume that members have answered the fact-gathering questions on their own.
- Always ask both of the questions under Day One—one is about the chapter and the other about the optional sermon. Also, the final question for each week's study is important.
- If a discussion takes off, let it go unless it really gets off topic. That's moving with the Spirit.
- Encourage people with a nod, smile, or word or two when they share. If an answer is significantly off track, pray that someone else will question it, which will be perceived as less threatening than your questioning it. You might say, "That's interesting—I have never heard that before. What does someone else think?" You can also direct the group back to the text. Your goal is to provide a safe, nonthreatening time of discussion so people will keep coming back and the Spirit and the Word will lead them into truth.
- If someone in the group tends to dominate the discussion, here are some things that can help:
 - Say something like, "Shy people need pauses to gather courage to speak up, so if you are one who talks easily, hold back to help others. Share a few times, but don't jump in every time there is a silence."
 - Go around the circle with some questions so everyone has a chance to answer. Often the opening questions or closing ones are good for this.
 - Ask, "Can we hear from someone who hasn't had a chance to share?"
 - If it continues to be a problem, take the individual aside privately and ask for his or her help, repeating what you said about shy people.
 - After the first study, send an email, text, or note to the people who came, thanking them for coming and affirming them in some small way. The main reason people drop out of groups is because they don't feel valued.



Lesson-by-Lesson Facilitator Notes

Answers to questions can be found in the Bible text or in the chapter text. In this section, you'll find help for some of the more challenging questions, which are marked in each lesson with an asterisk (*).

Optional Get-Acquainted Bible Study

If you finish early, feel free to get started together on Day Two of Bible Study One, first reading aloud Luke 24:1–12.

Bible Study One

At the start of Day Two, be sure to have someone read aloud the main text (Luke 24:1–12) and take time for comments. Don't be afraid of silences; they give the shy members time to speak up. Do the same when you get to verses 13–35 on Day Three and verses 36–46 on Day Five.

- 12a. We don't know if the two on the road were in the upper room at the Last Supper, when Jesus broke the bread and said, "This is My body," but they probably had heard about it from the others.
13. This would be a great question to hear from many about. If your group is small, you could go around the circle, giving individuals the freedom to say, "Pass."
15. All of the Old Testament can be divided into three types of literature, or genres: history (Genesis through Esther), poetry (Job through the Song of Songs), and prophecy (Isaiah through Malachi). Jesus mentioned each when he said, "The Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). These represent all three parts of the Old Testament.
17. Hear from many on this question.

Prayer Time: Many people are uncomfortable praying aloud in groups, so this is a way to ease them into it, just having them share one takeaway or God Hunt for which they are thankful. Tell them they can keep their eyes open—it still “counts” as prayer! Their words can be as simple as “Thank you for this group.” Or they can say, “Pass.”

Bible Study Two

Remember to begin with members sharing their best God Hunt answer of the week and their responses to both of the questions from Day One. Remember also to read aloud key passages throughout the study and get comments, allowing time for silence between answers.

14. Because God is relational, we are too. We long to be in relationship.

Because both male and female are in the image of God, the image of
God is not reflected completely by just one gender; both are necessary.

18/19. These closing questions are important to ask.

Prayer Time: Tell the group you will be breaking into smaller groups to pray. In the smaller groups, each person should share a personal need rather than for her uncle Tom’s neighbor. A prayer request could be as simple as “Help me complete the homework” or “I need wisdom with my strong-willed toddler.”

If several participants are new to group prayer, you could model this for the whole group with two people who are comfortable with prayer. (Practice with them ahead of time.) Explain that you are demonstrating what the prayer would look like after you have gone around and asked for a personal prayer request from everyone. Now you lift up their names. This is sometimes called “popcorn prayer” because people share briefly (pop) and when the popping stops, you move to the next person. For example:

You: Let’s pray for Molly.

Tom: Thank you that Molly experienced your help with her house decisions.

You: Please help Molly to have wisdom in her finances.

Molly: Yes, Lord!

(The popping prayers pause, so you move on to the next person.)

You: Let’s pray for Tom.

Molly: Thank you that Tom had a good conversation with his father.

Lynn: Please continue to move in that relationship.

(The popping prayers pause, so you move on to the next person.)

Bible Study Three

Begin with the best God Hunt discoveries of the week and the opening two questions.

- 3a. The lie is always some form of God not having our best interests at heart; therefore, the temptation is to go our own way.
- 3c. Though it is usually good for the facilitator not to be the first to answer, when the question calls for vulnerability, you should be prepared to model that if no one else jumps in.
- 7b. Jesus, for He is the only one who did not have a human father, therefore, “the offspring of a woman.”
8. To be just, sin must be punished—and it was, when Christ died in our stead. To be loving, Christ had to be willing to take the burden of our sins on Himself, and He was.
- 9c. Instead of each endeavoring to control the other, endeavor to be in submission to each other, putting your spouse’s needs ahead of your own and dying to self. As the facilitator, be sure to ask for illustrations for this one.

Bible Study Four

Begin with the best God Hunt encounters of the week and the opening two questions.

- 10c. If we put God first, we will relinquish control to Him rather than going our own way and breaking His commandments.
11. This answer is similar to that of 10c. Idolatry is the sin beneath the sin, so if we aren’t walking in the light, in love, or in truth, a heart idol is at work.
12. Many struggle with the black-and-white statements of 1 John, but we know because of 1:8 (“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves”) that John isn’t saying a child of God doesn’t sin but that the persistent direction of his or her life is to honor God. By contrast, the persistent direction of a child of Satan is to not care about honoring God. It has to do with which “seed” is in you.

- 13b. Control seems most likely; instead of doing it God's way (repenting of his heart attitude), Cain takes the reins and solves the problem his way, through murder.

Bible Study Five

5. Eliphaz would have fallen on the religious side of the chart. He advises Job in 4:6 to trust in Job's own piety, his own righteousness. And his rhetorical question in verse 7 implies that bad things don't happen to good people, but that is not what Scripture or life tells us. All the disciples except John were martyred, and so has it been with many of the godliest people who ever lived.

In verses 12–16, we actually see an evil, lying spirit inspiring Eliphaz. As Mike Mason notes, "One even gets the feeling that, as frightening as this experience was, Eliphaz would not have missed it for anything."¹

11. Religious: sinful, slaves, does not love Christ. Gospel: abides, set free, loves Christ.
- 15d. You can direct group members to the Tim Keller chart for help if needed. Then rephrase the question with an example: "How does religion enslave and lead to barrenness, and how does the gospel set free and lead to fruitfulness? For example, when criticized, if you can't stop thinking about it, it enslaves and hurts you. But if, because of the gospel, you are confident of your worth, you can listen receptively to criticism and respond to it, and that leads to freedom and fruitfulness."

Bible Study Six

The sacrifice of Isaac is a challenging story, so you will find it helpful to listen to Tim Keller's sermon to prepare for facilitating this lesson.

Bible Study Seven

Remember to keep asking for everyone's best God Hunt discovery of the week as an icebreaker!

8. This is a little challenging because Job asks a question (Job 14:14), then listens, and then reveals what God has put in his heart. One day, just as Jesus called the name of Lazarus, He will call Job's name and the name of every believer, and we will rise from the dead, each of us with a new body,

like Christ's resurrected body. He will do this because our transgressions have been covered over!

Bible Study Eight

- 3c. Ezekiel sheds light on what otherwise is a confusing passage, for many have thought the water Jesus mentions in John 3:5 ("born of water and the Spirit") refers to water baptism or the water of the first birth. But the parallel with Ezekiel shows us that this new birth comes not through man but through God. God cleanses us as He leads us to repentance, and then He puts His Spirit within us.

Prayer Time: You might comment that so often our prayers are for God to change circumstances but that we should also be continually asking Him to change our hearts, to give us the power to overcome our idols and the faith to trust His love.

Bible Study Nine

- 5f. Waves and breakers can represent troubles that keep coming, yet we also see from the second part of Psalm 42:7 that they can represent the steadfast love and songs of the Lord. It's significant that the psalmist refers to "all your breakers and your waves."
- 5g. The psalmist is in distress, yet just as Jonah knows God cast him into the sea (Jonah 2:3) and says, "I am driven away from your sight," he also knows he "shall again look upon [the LORD's] holy temple" (verse 4).

Encourage everyone to watch both Michael Reeves's twenty-minute video and Lucy's five-minute testimony before next week, as these will shed great light on a difficult study.

Bible Study Ten

4. We know Scripture is inspired by God and inerrant—and yet not dictated. This verse seems to imply that God fills the hearts of the writers so that His thoughts overflow, but amazingly, He still uses the personalities and temperaments of the people He created and called.

- 11c. Our Bridegroom, Jesus, died that we might live. He also asks us to die to ourselves, putting Him before other loves, even our family (Psalm 45:10). But with every death there is a resurrection!

Bible Study Eleven

If you choose to divide this study into two meetings, assign the first three days for the first week and go as far as you can in discussion. Then assign the rest. If you are going to do it all in one week, circle a few questions from each day and be sure to do Day Five.

- 3c. Jesus stops before reading “and the day of vengeance of our God” (Isaiah 61:2) because in His first coming, He came to bear vengeance rather than bring it. This is what He wants to emphasize, but He will later speak of the final judgment, when judgment will come.
7. You may need to go first to model vulnerability.
8. The gospel teaches our hearts to fear (for we are made aware of our sin, as Isaiah is) and also relieves our fear (after the hot coal touches his lips, Isaiah feels purified).
- 13b. You could rephrase this, asking them to finish this sentence with an illustration: “How do people, even children, refer to this unwritten moral law when they say, ‘It’s not fair that you . . . ’?”

Bible Study Twelve

- 10b. The word *engraved* indicates sharp metal inflicting the words, leaving wounds. (See also John 20:27–28.) Jesus came to rescue His bride, and His crucifixion accomplished that.

Bible Study Thirteen

If it is possible to plan a longer time today with a lunch or supper celebration, please do! This week’s study is long, and the sharing should be rich and unhurried if possible. A meal also lends itself to a time of closure and reflection as you conclude your time together.

Notes

Optional Get-Acquainted Bible Study

1. Karen Mains gave our family the idea for the God Hunt in her book *The God Hunt: The Delightful Chase and the Wonder of Being Found* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003).

Chapter 1: A Journey of Surprises

1. Dr. Jeff Johnson, conversation with the author, summer of 2017.
2. Outline of Rudolf Otto's concept of the numinous, based on *The Idea of the Holy*, 2nd ed., trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), <https://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Fac/Adler/Reln101/Otto.htm>.
3. Darrell Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 1917.
4. John Piper, "Letter to an Incomplete, Insecure Teenager," *Desiring God*, July 16, 2011, www.desiringgod.org/articles/letter-to-an-incomplete-insecure-teenager.
5. Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 17.

Chapter 2: The God of the Dance

The epigraph is taken from John Piippo, "Bono's Conversion," July 27, 2012, www.johnpiippo.com/2012/07/bonos-conversion.html.

1. C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2017), 279–80.
2. John Wesley, "I Felt My Heart Strangely Warmed," *Journal of John Wesley*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ii.xvi.html.
3. "BreakPoint: Chuck Colson's Conversion," *BreakPoint*, October 16, 2017, www.breakpoint.org/2017/10/breakpoint-chuck-colsons-conversion.
4. Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* (New York: Anchor, 1999), 48.
5. Linda Strom, *Karla Faye Tucker Set Free: Life and Faith on Death Row* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2000), video 8 of *Idol Lies*: <https://deebrestin.com/idol-lies>.

6. Discipleship Unlimited, 2018. This number is based on statistics of women who have been through DU's eighteen-month program and remained out of prison for at least five years.
7. Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 40.
8. Richard Sibbes, "The Successful Seeker," in *Works of Richard Sibbes* (Edinburgh, UK: James Nichol, 1862–64), 6:113.
9. Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994), 128.
10. "Prayer Tips: George Müller," The Prayer Foundation, http://prayerfoundation.org/prayer_tips_george_mueller.htm.
11. Wallace Stegner, *Crossing to Safety* (New York: Modern Classics, 2002), 21.
12. Stegner, *Crossing to Safety*, 23.
13. John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2010), 484.
14. Joni Eareckson Tada and Steven Estes, *When God Weeps: Why Our Sufferings Matter to the Almighty* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 56.

Chapter 3: He Showed Up with a Whip

The epigraph is taken from Timothy Keller, "Paradise Promised," Gospel in Life, November 12, 2000, MP3 audio, 36:21, <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/paradise-promised-5209>.

1. Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day," Abraham Lincoln Online, March 30, 1863, www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/fast.htm.
2. Timothy J. Keller, "Nakedness and the Holiness of God," Gospel in Life, March 21, 1993, MP3 audio, 47:56, <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/nakedness-the-holiness-of-god-6247>.
3. Mark Regnerus, "Christians Are Part of the Same Dating Pool as Everybody Else. That's Bad for the Church," *Washington Post*, September 5, 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/09/05/christians-are-part-of-the-same-dating-pool-as-everyone-else-thats-bad-for-the-church/?utm_term=.57350cfdd764.
4. Regnerus, "Christians Are Part of the Same Dating Pool."

5. Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 71.

Chapter 4: Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

1. Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 268.
2. Josh Huynh, “Bob Newhart-Stop It,” YouTube video, 6:20, September 1, 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow0lr63y4Mw.
3. Lee Ezell, *The Missing Piece* (New York: Bantam, 1988).
4. Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 29.
5. Timothy Keller, *Encounters with Jesus: Unexpected Answers to Life’s Biggest Questions* (New York: Penguin, 2015), 163.

Chapter 5: Religion Versus the Gospel

The epigraph is taken from John Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984), 126.

1. Taken from Timothy Keller, *Gospel in Life Study Guide: Grace Changes Everything* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 16, copyright © 2010 by Timothy Keller. Used by permission of Zondervan, www.zondervan.com.
2. Stott, *Message of Galatians*, 124.
3. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 33–35.
4. Stott, *Message of Galatians*, 126.
5. Quoted in Keller, *Gospel in Life*, 18.
6. Stott, *Message of Galatians*, 127.

Chapter 6: The Plotline of the Bible

1. Madeleine L’Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (New York: Convergent, 1980), 174.
2. L’Engle, *Walking on Water*, 175.
3. L’Engle, *Walking on Water*, 177.
4. C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Glasgow: William Collins and Sons, 1950), 75.
5. Dee Brestin, “Sally Brestin: Aslan,” Vimeo video, 3:17, <https://deebrestin.com/aslan>.

6. Justin Taylor, "J. Alec Motyer (1924–2016)," The Gospel Coalition, August 26, 2016, www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/j-alec-motyer-1924-2016.
7. Taylor, "J. Alec Motyer."
8. Taylor, "J. Alec Motyer."
9. Taylor, "J. Alec Motyer."

Chapter 7: The Surprising Way to Pray

1. Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994), 59–78.
2. William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 2.
3. Philip Yancey, *The Bible Jesus Read* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 109.
4. Yancey, *The Bible Jesus Read*, 109.
5. Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 176.
6. Karen Mains, *The God Hunt: The Delightful Chase and the Wonder of Being Found* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 13.
7. Larry Crabb, *The Papa Prayer: The Prayer You've Never Prayed* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 33–35.
8. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (London: W. Ball, 1839), 902.

Chapter 8: The Surprising Fruit of Suffering

1. Discipleship Unlimited, www.discipleshipunlimited.org.
2. Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David* (1885; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 1:195.

Chapter 9: Our Secret Weapon

The epigraph is taken from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 20.

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1970), 9–12.
2. Elisabeth Elliot, *Through Gates of Splendor* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1981), 267.

Chapter 10: A Royal Wedding Song

The epigraph is taken from Sara Hagerty, *Every Bitter Thing Is Sweet: Tasting the Goodness of God in All Things* (Nashville: Zondervan, 2016), 49.

1. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 24, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2006), 495.
2. WelcomeToTheSermon, “Mike Reeves—Enjoying Christ Constantly,” YouTube video, 13:31, May 2, 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRH_E2u5cGY.
3. A. W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian: How Heaven’s Children Live on Earth* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1986), chap. 34.
4. Charles Spurgeon, *Charles Spurgeon on the Song of Solomon: 64 Sermons to Ignite a Passion for Jesus!* (Christian Classics Treasury, 2013), Kindle.

Chapter 11: Holy, Holy, Holy

The epigraph is taken from R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 128–29.

1. Sproul, *Holiness of God*, 28.
2. “Read Rachael Denhollander’s Full Victim Impact Statement About Larry Nassar,” CNN, January 30, 2018, www.cnn.com/2018/01/24/us/rachael-denhollander-full-statement/index.html.
3. “Read Rachael Denhollander’s Full Victim Impact Statement.”
4. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 304.
5. John Eldredge, *All Things New: Heaven, Earth, and the Restoration of Everything You Love* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017), 145.
6. Catherine McDowell, “Why Do Christians Care About Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls?,” The Gospel Coalition, February 9, 2017, www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/ryan-reeves/why-do-christians-care-about-qumran-and-dead-sea-scrolls.
7. Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 495.
8. Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 497.

Chapter 12: Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye, My People

The epigraph is taken from J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah by the Day: A New Devotional Translation* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2011), 261.

1. “Messiah and George Frideric Handel,” Christianity.com, March 2007, www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1701-1800/messiah-and-george-frideric-handel-11630237.html.

2. Alphabet Photography Inc., “Christmas Food Court Flash Mob, Hallelujah Chorus—Must See!” YouTube video, 4:56, November 11, 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXh7JR9oKVE.
3. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 12.
4. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1706; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 4:166.
5. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 188.
6. Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (New York: Century Company, 1906), 337.
7. Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, 337–38.
8. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 42.
9. Kevin DeYoung, “How Can This Be? A Good Friday Meditation,” The Gospel Coalition, April 18, 2014, www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/how-can-this-be-a-good-friday-meditation.

Chapter 13: Homesick No More

The epigraph is taken from C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: HarperCollins, 1984), 213.

1. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2008), 104.
2. Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2005), 43.
3. “Home,” by Drew Pearson and Blake Holden, © 2011, sung by Phillip Phillips on *American Idol*.
4. John Eldredge, *All Things New: Heaven, Earth, and the Restoration of Everything You Love* (Nashville: Nelson, 2017), 11.
5. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 52.
6. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 136–7.
7. Eric Alexander, MP3 audio, 41:55, <http://tapesfromscotland.org/Audio7/7186.mp3>.
8. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (New York: Ballantine, 1965), 246.
9. J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 531.

Lesson-by-Lesson Facilitator Notes

1. Mike Mason, *The Gospel According to Job: An Honest Look at Pain and Doubt from the Life of One Who Lost Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 55.