

*Love Echoed Back*  
*I Cried Out; He Answered*

*Study Guide*

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TRANSFORMING LOVE MINISTRIES

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## *About the Author*

Elaine is the founder of Transforming Love Ministries. She is also a board member of the Christian Business Coalition of Hampton Roads and a certified John Maxwell coach, teacher, trainer, and speaker. Elaine lives in Suffolk, Virginia with Darrell, her husband of 24 years, and their one son, Nicholas.

During her childhood, Elaine was raised in the Christian faith and attended Western Branch Baptist Church. She gave her life to the Lord at age 11. Currently, she is a long-standing member of Believers Church in Chesapeake, Virginia. There she has served the Lord in several capacities. For several years, she and her husband served as small group leaders. Currently, Elaine is a part of the Prayer Team, and prays each week over those seeking intercession after the evening service. She is a member and past trip coordinator for the Believers Missions Team, traveling yearly to Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua to support the local church and orphanage there.

Today, Elaine is answering the Lord's call to write and speak His word as well as to establish a full-service women's ministry in the Hampton Roads area. TLM provides opportunities for spiritual growth during peak times of transition in a woman's spiritual walk in order to assist her to fully internalize her faith and demonstrate God's transformative power.

She wrote her first book, *Love Echoed Back*, after going through a tremendous trial that stretched from 2008 to 2013. She hopes in sharing her story, and how Jesus worked through that situation, she will bring hope and restoration to others who feel discouraged by challenging life circumstances.

It is Elaine's greatest desire that everyone attain the kind of life Jesus has called us to and that they come to know the depths of the Savior's love. *If you cry out, He will answer!*

## *Suggested Use of Study Guide*

This study guide is designed to be an eight-week study that may include, if desired, a Welcome and/or Wrap Up time. Each week there are five days' worth of material to work through. However, you will find that each day's work will take less than 15-30 minutes, depending on how deep you take the study. You will also find a *challenge* at the end of each day's material. You may choose to do one or all of them. The goal is to get you started on stretching outside your comfort zone so that your faith will rise!

Enjoy!

### Suggested Format for Small Groups

Meeting 1: Group welcoming time, review group and study guidelines

Meeting 2: Introduction: My Heart to Yours/Chapter 1: Spiritual Oz

Meeting 3: Chapter 2: When the Rain Lasts All Day and All Night

Meeting 4: Chapter 3: Life Redefined

Meeting 5: Chapter 4: The Road Less Traveled

Meeting 6: Chapter 5: Life, His Way

Meeting 7: Chapter 6: Are We There Yet?

Meeting 8: Chapter 7: Have You Arrived Yet?

Meeting 9: Chapter 8: Daddy's Girl/Conclusion: The Widow's Oil

Meeting 10: (optional) Wrap Up

*Day One*

1. Meditate on Psalm 32:8. What does this verse say to you about how involved God wants to be in our lives? How involved with your life do you honestly allow God to be?

Let's take an inventory of our lives and our Christian walk.

2. What movie, TV show, or song describes your walk with Christ? (Have fun with this one!)

3. In your day to day life, what are you struggling against? (e.g., finances, relationships, emotions, etc.)

4. Go back and read Ephesians 6:12. How does this verse change your perspective on your struggles? Can you sense something more going on than what you see on the surface? How?

Fill in:

Scripture brings to light life is really a series of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . They are the reflection of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ . We must, therefore, control our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .

5. Review James 1:2-4, 12 as well as Revelation 2:10. How do you feel about God testing your faith in light of the reward promised in these verses (i.e., crown of life)?

6. Read Psalm 107:2 and Isaiah 44:22. What does it mean to you to be redeemed?



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In this world, everyone is expendable; however, through  
Jesus, everyone is redeemable.



7. As a Christian, what are your short-term and long-term goals for next year regarding your spiritual growth?

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*CHALLENGE*

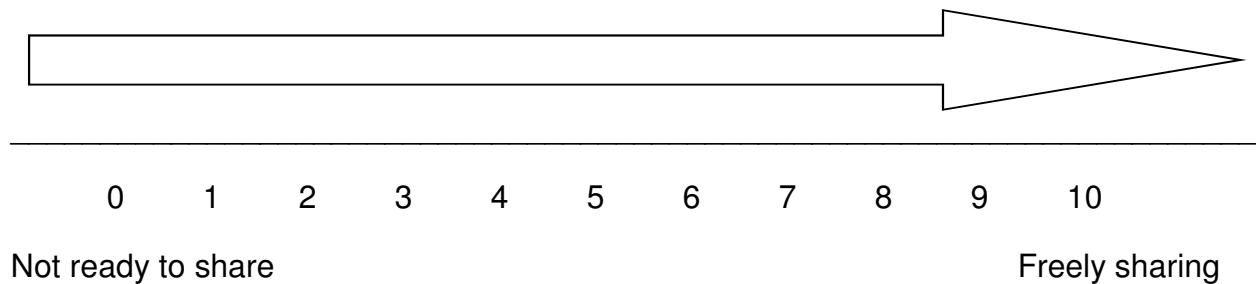
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\*Tape Psalm 32:8 to a mirror. Memorize this verse, and take it to heart. Ask God to show you the path He has chosen for your life and to open your eyes to things you have not opened yourself up to out of fear or anxiety.

*Day Two*

1. Read through the entire short writing titled *Dear God*. What part of *Dear God* resonates with you the most? Is there any piece of it that reflects your current state of mind?

Let's take a moment to gauge our spiritual temperature regarding sharing our faith.  
2. On the 0-10 scale below, mark the number that best represents your confidence level in sharing your faith. Even if you marked that you share your faith freely, what makes you feel the most inadequate about sharing your faith?



3. Do you feel Jesus working in your life? According to Philippians 1:6, we are all works in progress. So, which area(s) in your life are still “under construction”?



Take a minute to go back and read Max Lucado's explanation of "sweet spot" on page three. Then consider the high point of Job's life – he was wealthy, had a large family, and was well respected in his community. At that point in his life, he certainly appeared to be in a sweet spot as well as in the center of God's will.

4. Have you experienced living "in the zone"? Are you there now, or do you, like Job, long to return to that sweet spot in your life? (See Job 29:1-3) Does (or did) your sweet spot intersect with the center of God's will?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Take whichever piece of the short writing, *Dear God*, that spoke to you the most and repeat it throughout the day for the next several days. Journal what God reveals to you.

\*I truly believe we can all be healers through the power of Jesus. Pray the prayer on page 3 of *Love Echoed Back* and ask God to reveal to you how you can be a healer.

*Day Three*

1. If you have experienced a life-altering issue, what or who do you believe was at the center of it? How does 1 Peter 5:8 influence that opinion?

Certainly, there are times in life where we have little to no discord in our life. If we are walking with Jesus, however, it is not the norm for this to continue for months to years. If the waters of life are like glass, consider the fact that no movement equates stagnation... and God is never stagnated!

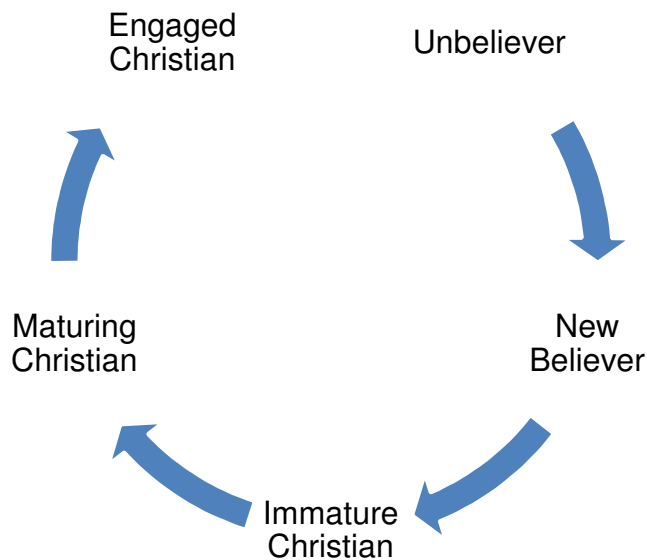
2. Has your life reflected more stagnation or more chaos of late?

Reflect on the words in Hebrews 6:18-19 that are in bold font:

So God has given both his **promise** and his **oath**. These two things are **unchangeable** because it is **impossible** for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have **great confidence** as we hold to the **hope** that lies before us. This hope is a **strong** and **trustworthy** anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary.

3. How do these verses affect your viewpoint about the God you believe in?

4. Have you ever heard the concept of “going to the next level” when it comes to God’s plan for your life? What level below would you place yourself on? How are you going to stretch outside of your comfort zone and get to the next level?



5. Are you actively involved in self-Bible study, small group, and/or Sunday worship? Are you just showing up or are you engaged, devoted, and/or seeking?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Find a Bible plan that takes you through the New Testament in 60-90 days.

*Day Four*

**Finding True Comfort in the Middle of a Crisis**

... the Father of \_\_\_\_\_ and the God of all \_\_\_\_\_, who \_\_\_\_\_ us in all our troubles, so that we can \_\_\_\_\_ those in any trouble with the \_\_\_\_\_ we ourselves receive from God. (2 Cor. 1:3-4 NIV)

1. What discomfort have you experienced that might be used by God in assisting others?

**Gaining Peace from the One True Source**

And the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, which transcends all \_\_\_\_\_, will guard your \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7 NIV)

2. Verse 7 differentiates God's peace from natural peace. How is God's peace described? Have you experienced that peace?

**Enduring the Challenge Before You**

... the testing of your faith produces \_\_\_\_\_. Let \_\_\_\_\_ finish its work so that you may be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, not lacking anything. (James 1:3-4 NIV)

3. According to James 1:3-4, if we submit to God's will and work through our trials with a proper attitude, what is the end result?

**Humility Trumps Pride**

\_\_\_\_\_ yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may  
\_\_\_\_\_ in due time. (1 Peter 5:6 NIV)

4. Peter tells us to approach a trial with humility. What does that mean to you?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Based on the four scriptures presented, explain which one affected you the deepest, and why?

*Day Five*

**Finding Eternal Things by Living through Temporal Things**

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ... (2 Cor. 4:17 NIV)

1. What percentage of time do you spend focused on eternal things? Name two things you will begin doing this week to refocus your attention to more heavenly things.



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Everything in life is temporary, but everything with Christ  
is eternal.



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**Learning to Let the Pain and Suffering of a Trial Work**

For it is \_\_\_\_\_ if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. (1 Peter 2:19 NIV)

2. What is the most unjust thing you have either experienced or known someone to bear? How did it make you feel? How do you view it now considering God's justice?

### **Trusting in the Law of Sowing and Reaping**

A man \_\_\_\_\_ what he \_\_\_\_\_. (Gal. 6:7 NIV)

3. What can be sown (or done) in the middle of a test that would reap (or create) a positive outcome?



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How we define our existence in relation to God,  
decisions plus actions, fuels an activity that occurs  
constantly, sowing produces reaping.

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### **Relying on His Protection**

To him who is able to keep you from \_\_\_\_\_ ... (Jude 1:24 NIV)

4. Can you give an example of a time when knowing Jesus kept you from stumbling into sin?

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### *CHALLENGE*

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\*Based on the four scriptures presented, explain which one affected you the deepest, and why?

\*Create a list of “go to” verses this week. Post them all over your house!

*Day One*

I hope after reading the short writing titled *The Door*, you come to this conclusion: Jesus does not intentionally stand outside of our hearts — we are either not letting Him in or not allowing Him into specific areas. His greatest desire is that we let Him in and allow Him to move around freely.

1. What, if any, prompting did you receive from God after reading *The Door*? Did He use the words of this short writing to speak to you about your perspective of Him?

2. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. How does this Scripture influence your view of the world and your life specifically?

3. Psalm 20:6 states that God gives victory to His anointed, and He answers him. Is there a time when God does not answer us? Explain how you have drawn your conclusion(s) about this issue?

4. With 1 Corinthians 2:9 as a backdrop, has there ever been a time when you overstepped God and did not wait on His plans for your life? What was the result?



5. What area(s) of your life do you still need to give to Jesus?



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There is invariably a point where we have to release the situation to Christ so that He can work through us and for us, because His plans are always better.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Pinpoint an area you need to give Jesus and then ask Him to start moving in that specific area. If necessary, seek to be prayed over to break that stronghold.

*Day Two*

1. What life event(s) has occurred that has impacted you to the core? Can you see God in it? How has this event(s) shaped you?

Read Lamentations 3:22-26. This section of Scripture is most often credited to Jeremiah as he looks around the city of Jerusalem. The Israelites, at this point in time, had just experienced the judgment of God, the city was in ruins, and the people were utterly devastated. At the core of this scene was the sin of the people, which had brought them to this point. Yet in this horrible situation, Jeremiah has mustered up enough faith to speak the words above.

2. Have you ever felt alone in your sin? If so, was there a point that God provided some sense of hope OR are you still seeking that comfort?

The Bible is full of examples of people who have gone through difficult circumstances. For example, Job and his loss of family and finances, David and his loss of integrity, the Women at the Well and her loss of self-worth, and Mary, the mother of Jesus', who felt the loss of a child.

3. What loss would be the most devastating to you, and why? Can you think of any situation the Bible does not cover?

*When the Rain Lasts All Day and All Night*

4. Death is a huge social issue. We, even as Christians, don't always handle it well. How does Proverbs 16:31 and Ecclesiastes 7:1 make you feel about aging and death?

Fill in:

In times of confusion, in times of grief, and for every time in between, the Bible provides us with a roadmap to life. Realize life isn't \_\_\_\_\_, but God is \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Are you using the Bible as your roadmap? Is it your GPS (God-pointing system)? Give an example.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If you are struggling with a specific life event, identify the emotions you are feeling (e.g., anger, grief, doubt, jealousy). Then, find two scriptures on how we should handle them.

*Day Three*

1. Have you sought out the Lord at any given point in life? What did He reveal to you?



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If you are still fishing in shallow water, God wants you to know He is waiting where the waters are deep!

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2. What impression of Job do you have after reading Job 1:20-22? Why would God give us such a picture?

3. Has God taken you to a breaking point in life? What was your reaction?

*When the Rain Lasts All Day and All Night*

Meditate on Job 42:2-3, 5-6 from the Amplified version:

I know that You can do all things, and that no thought *or* purpose of Yours can be restrained *or* thwarted. [You said to me] Who is this that darkens *and* obscures counsel [by words] without knowledge? Therefore [I now see] I have [rashly] uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know ... *I had heard of You [only] by the hearing of the ear, but now my [spiritual] eye sees You.* Therefore I loathe [my words] *and* abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

4. Have you ever been overwhelmed by God's greatness? What were the circumstances?

5. Have you been caught in a situation that you wanted it to turn out one way, but it went another? What did you learn about yourself, about God, and about His authority to rule over our lives?



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Looking back now, I believe Jesus was allowing me a glimpse of where I thought I wanted to be, so as time passed, I would come to realize that instead of reaching forward, I was reaching backwards.

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6. Are you looking backwards or reaching forward? Explain.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If you are going through something right now, write a simple prayer to God and ask to see His hand in it.

*Day Four*

1. When was the last pity party you threw yourself? Have you had the same doubts as David in Psalm 77:1-7? If so, did you feel you were less of a Christian for having them?

2. Have you counted your blessings lately? Take time to write 10 blessings in your life.

3. Ponder Judges 3:1-4. Are you starting to see trials in a different light? How do you feel when God tests your faith?

4. Faith can be active or passive. — Give examples of each from the Christian perspective.

5. Read Psalm 144:1. In your walk with Christ, what victories have you experienced (i.e., what areas of breakthrough have you had?) Can you relate them to “breaking the surface” and feeling accomplished?



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Reaching our spiritual milestones is more important to God than even our physical or financial ones.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Make a list of your spiritual milestones to date. List the next milestone on your list you hope to accomplish. Have a friend pray with you and hold you accountable in striving to meet it.



*Day Five*

1. Read John 4:21-24. How deep down does your worship go? Do you have more moments of superficial worship than deep spiritual worship? Can you identify what holds you back from deep spiritual worship at times?

2. Read from Matthew 3:16 to verse 4:11 for yourself. Which area(s) below do you struggle in the most? Give an example.

-Lust of the flesh

-Lust of the eye

-Pride of life

3. We all have situations that weigh on us from time to time. Reflect on Exodus 14:13-14. What is God removing from your life to help you see specific circumstances in your life differently?

*When the Rain Lasts All Day and All Night*

4. Do you allow the viewpoint of others to rule your life? When has the decisions of other people affected you? How have you dealt with it?

A couple of passages to keep in mind when these situations occur are:

**To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32 NIV**

**“Be still, and know that I am God...” Ps. 46:10 NLT**



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When you start to see the trails of life as the thing that will set you free from your worldly vantage point—you will find freedom!

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*When the Rain Lasts All Day and All Night*

5. Ponder Psalm 33:18-22. List two instances where God has shown love to you. What detail(s) did He specifically take care of so you were certain He did it?

6. Read 1 Kings 18:42-44. What rain cloud are you hoping to see? (i.e., what are you asking God for?) Are you standing in His promise(s) or tapping your foot with impatience?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Describe the steps you will take to conquer your struggle with either lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, or pride of life.

*Day One*

When I wrote *Paper and Ink*, I had come to the realization that I had allowed my career to define who I was and not **whose** I was.

1. What have you allowed to define you, and how did it affect your relationship with God?

2. Read Psalm 119:37. What do you consider “worthless things”? How do you relate this to Isaiah 64:6?

3. Look at Romans 13:1-5. What questions does this passage bring to mind? How do you view those in authority in light of this passage?



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Injustices will happen in this world; how they are faced will define them.

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4. Read Romans 12:19-21. This passage in Romans is very familiar to many. Have you been able to apply this to your life, and how?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Think of one person who has wronged you in the past and pray for that person this week.

*Day Two*

1. Read Matthew 6:19-20. Where do you stand on materialism? Is there something you possess that you would have a hard time letting go of?

2. Where on your list of priorities do finances fall? What can you do to improve your financial goals?

3. Read Malachi 3:10. How do you feel about tithing? If you do tithe, what initial fears did you hold?

4. Read either version of the Widow's Mite (i.e., Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21: 1-4). What does this story say to you?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Start practicing letting go of things—start small (e.g., couple of dollars, a necklace, some clothes) and see what God brings you.

*Day Three*

1. Have you or your family been taken by surprise concerning a health condition? When you hear of someone who is severely ill, what thoughts cross your mind?

2. Take some time to meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. What characteristic of love are you best at showing?

3. Reflect on Isaiah 55:8-9. Has there been a time when Jesus surprised you regarding the plans He had for you? How did you respond?

4. Read Lamentations 3:52-58. Do you see God as your protector? Give an example of when you knew God was protecting you from something.





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Status is nothing to God; relationship is everything.

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5. List five ways you have worked on your relationship with God in the last 30 days. If you don't have as many blanks filled in as you feel there should be, what ONE thing can you commit to doing today? (e.g., giving him the first 15 minutes of your day, praying nightly, reading the Bible daily)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Commit to showing one additional characteristic of love to a family member or friend this week.

*Day Four*

When reading about the woman with an issue of blood (see Mark 5:27-29), I hope you get a sense of the major physical obstacles she had to overcome to reach Him.

- She was probably anemic and weak from her condition.
- She was an unclean woman within a huge Jewish crowd.
- She had to push and fight to get to Him.

1. See the desperation? Can you relate to her need for Jesus?

2. Now, identify what is keeping you from seeking Jesus that hard. Is it complacency, disbelief, pride?



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If you give your emotional struggles a “physical feel,” you can begin to fight your way to the Savior.

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3. If you feel you are stuck in time, what insights have you gained so far?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If the conversation between Jesus and you seems quiet, pray that Jesus will start shedding light on what He is teaching you.

*Day Five*

The LORD will work out his plans for my life— for your faithful love, O LORD, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for you made me. Ps. 138:8 NLT

We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps. Prov. 16:9 NLT

You can make many plans, but the LORD's purpose will prevail. Prov. 19:21 NLT

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. James 1:22 NLT

1. Perhaps you will not go into full time ministry, but you are still called to serve. Contemplate the scriptures above, and map out below what you would like to do for God if you had the time, the resources, and a clear path to accomplishing it. Dream BIG!!! This is your challenge for today!



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It isn't what you keep from doing that excites the Lord;  
it's what you do!!

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*Day One*



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...When space and time and doubts no longer separate us, will we then perceive only a part of all that You are? Life is only a shadow, a mist we are passing through. Time is only an illusion. When all things are revealed, we will stand amazed, overwhelmed by our lack of understanding, our lack of wisdom...

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1. When you consider James 4:14, what becomes your top priority in life?

2. Read Matthew 7:13-14. How do you explain this concept of 'the narrow gate' to nonbelievers?

3. We all have things that we are praying for. What are you waiting to hear from God about this week? Name your top 3 concerns.

4. Ponder Zechariah 4:6. What are you trying to do on your own? What prevents you from handing it over to God?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*This week write out your top three prayers and ask God to provide a solution or instruction. Then tear them up before God as a symbol that you know He has handled the issue(s).

*Day Two*

1. After reading about the life of Joseph, does any part of his life reflect your life? What part strikes the most resemblance to yours? (If not Joseph, which Bible character do you relate to the most, and why?)

2. After hearing the words concerning Joseph in Psalm 105:16-22, what hope does it give you about God's acknowledgement of our intentions?

3. Currently, where do you feel opposition in life? If you don't, are you concerned?

4. Has there been a particular sermon that has made a huge difference in your life?  
Which one and how?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Put this question in a prominent place in your home and refer to it daily for two weeks:

**Am I expecting Jesus to follow me or am I willing to follow Jesus?**

Journal what the Lord tells you during this time and use it to grow closer to Him.



*Day Three*

1. How does the passage from Ephesians 2:10 shift your perspective about God's timing?



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Most of us underestimate what God wants to accomplish in us and through us. I'm not sure if we underestimate ourselves, or we underestimate who God is. God is big; God is amazing; God is huge; God is powerful. Do you really think an amazing, powerful God is going to choose you and give you a plan for your life that is a ho-hum, anybody could do it kind of plan? —Jamey Stuart

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2. Does the above quote hit home for you? Have you underestimated God, and how?

3. Read Job 30:16-17. Have you experienced a breaking point on your journey to ultimate freedom in Christ? Describe those emotions.

4. Reflect on Numbers 14:24. What kind of hope does the story of Caleb give you in regards to the things you feel God has promised you or prayers you have made?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*List any prayers or dreams you are glad were NOT answered and the positive things that came out of those requests not being answered.

*Day Four*

1. What is the boldest prayer you have ever prayed to God? How does it compare to Joshua's prayer in Joshua 10:12-14?

2. Read 1 Kings 18:33-38. Is there anything or anyone too hopeless or too far gone for God to use?

3. Reflect on Isaiah 43:2-3, 18-19, paying close attention to verses 18-19. Are you ready for God to do something new in your life? What does that look like for you?



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Can you say to Jesus, "I know You are great; I know You are awesome. You can handle my issues, questions, and doubts. In fact, You can handle all of me at the same time You handle everything else in the world! It is no match for You. Here I am, use me."

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4. How long has it been since you said to God "use me" 100%? What fears do you have in saying something along these lines?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Write a bold prayer out and repeat it until you can muster all the faith and courage you can to proclaim it as done.

*Day Five*

1. Reflect on the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-3, 9. The age-old question for Christians is, "Can you maintain a high level of praise for God during the good times at the same intensity level you cry out to Him in the bad times?" Express one victory in this area.

2. What does your praise look like? (e.g., praying, singing, helping others) As you have grown in your relationship with Christ, has your style of praise changed, and how?

3. Can you believe we are halfway through the study? List two things you have learned so far that are specific to you. What do you plan to do about it?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If you can, clearly identify one style of praise that comes natural to you. Also, identify and try another form in which you are not as comfortable with. Step outside your comfort zone in this area.

*Day One*

Read Psalm 105:4. This verse from the book of Psalms has been near and dear to me for a long time. I have actually attached it to my personal email signature, and it goes out with my email replies. I encourage you to seek His face always.

1. Do you have one special verse you go to? Consider sharing it with the group.



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Serving the Master by serving others is by far the  
greatest defense we have available next to prayer.

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2. Have you used “service” as a way to work through a problem? If so, what were the benefits of doing so?

3. Are you serving the local church? If not, what hesitations do you have?



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If you are bold enough to ask Jesus to use you, expect  
Him to train you.

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4. How can you balance serving the church versus participating in church only?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If you are not serving in a local church, seriously consider one area to serve in. If you serve in at least one capacity, are there other ways you can serve as well?

*Day Two*

1. Read back through the story of Jabez's prayer in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. How did the story of Jabez's prayer affect you?

2. What intrigues you the most about Jabez's prayer, and why?

- Request for supernatural favor
- Request to increase the impact one makes
- Admitted dependence on God to accomplish the impossible
- A request for protection



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The nature of thinking we know best has to be broken  
before He can truly work.

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3. What does Matthew 5:3 mean to you? Who are 'those who are poor'?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Place the Jabez prayer somewhere in your house and repeat it several times this week. Pick a specific piece of it to concentrate on.

*Day Three*

1. How do you feel about doing outreach in the community? If servant evangelism is done at your church, what were your initial thoughts regarding doing a servant evangelism project?

2. Have you given any thought to the world lately? What area of brokenness touches you the most? What can you do to help?

3. What if God calls you to go out of the country to serve him?

4. Read Matthew 6:25-27. In light of the discussion surrounding Nicaragua, do you struggle with day-to-day needs? Have you allowed God to fill the gap? What happened?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If you struggle with materialism or budgeting, take a course on finances. I recommend Financial Peace by Dave Ramsey.

\*Consider sponsoring a child in Nicaragua through Orphanetwork.  
[www.orphanetwork.org](http://www.orphanetwork.org)

*Day Four*

1. Reflect on Hebrews 4:13. Have you contemplated the concept of God seeing everything? Although this can be extremely intimidating, do you also find it comforting?

2. Would you allow God to strip you of anything and everything He sees fit, if it made you a better Christian? If not, you are not alone –see the story of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22). What was the outcome of this story?

3. Are you willing to give up a heavenly reward later for an earthly treasure you have now? Be honest.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Research what the Bible states will be some of our rewards once life is over. List at least two.

*Day Five*

1. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 1:25-29. Does it give you hope and courage that God can use whomever He desires? Do you know of someone who is being used by God, but didn't seem eligible? Share that story (maybe, it's your story).



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When we start to see this life as more than an opportunity for us to prosper, we start to understand our true purposes.

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2. In light of King Solomon's observation in Ecclesiastes 2:1, share an experience that left you with the same conclusion?

3. Read Matthew 20:28. Name one area of service you are planning to improve upon this year.



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True service does not factor recognition into the equation.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*If you could pick one place to go and do missions, where would it be and why? Give some thought to making that happen.

*Day One*

I love the picture that Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 6:6, 10. I strive to be that kind of Christian. Take a moment to read those verses.

1. What area(s) are you struggling with and would like prayer over?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Ponder on the words of David in Psalm 139:23-24. When is the last time you asked God to search your heart? Are you ready to pray a prayer like David's?



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Stagnation is the true enemy of our soul. If we are not growing spiritually, we have widened the playing field for the Devil. He will not hesitate to make a move when he sees an opening.

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3. Do you agree or disagree with the quote above regarding stagnation. Why or why not?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Reread 2 Corinthians 6: 6, 10. Give an example(s) from the last 30 days of when you have shown: purity, understanding, patience, and kindness.

*Day Two*

Isaiah gives us some beautiful promises of God.

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. Isa. 26:3–4 NIV

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us. Isa. 33:22 NIV

“The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God endures forever.” Isa. 40:8 NIV

1. Which passage from Isaiah speaks to you the most, and why?

2. Galatians 5:22-23 speaks of the spiritual fruit possessed by Christians (i.e., love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). Which fruit of the Spirit is evident in your life?

3. Now, after identifying the “fruit of the Spirit” you possess, which part of the mission laid out in Isaiah 61:1-3 can you relate to the best? How do your spiritual characteristics (i.e., fruit) assist you in this area?

4. Part of Isaiah 61:1-3 is the use of our testimony. We are to ‘proclaim the good news’ and demonstrate it through what God has done in our lives. What is your testimony? Take some time to write it out.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Share the highlights of your testimony with the group.



*Day Three*

1. Read Psalm 73:21-26. As we prepare to discuss the life of Paul, let's answer this question: Am I the person Christ needs me to be? You are the only one who can answer this question. Take some time and pray about it, seek His answer.



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In honesty, this truth remains—we are all works in progress.

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We must realize it took time for Paul to become the person he was. The longer he walked with God, the deeper his spiritual growth was.

2. When you read Romans 1:16, do you feel you have reached the level of being completely unashamed of the gospel? Can you apply it to every situation of life yet?



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Non-Christians are not reading the Bible; they are  
reading your life.

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3. Consider the “other side” of Paul’s life, the not so glamorous one (e.g., the part where delay was present, people were unwilling to hear him, and the times of defeat that got in his way). Do you feel as if you could possibly “rise to the occasion” like Paul did? What would discourage you the most, and why?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Share how you would explain to a non-Christian your imperfections.

*Day Four*

1. After reflecting on Paul's life, what thoughts come to mind? What goals would you like to set for your own life when it comes to spreading the gospel?

2. Which of Paul's writings touched you the most?

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Romans 5:3-5            | Problems & Trials = Endurance |
| • 1 Corinthians 13:13     | Love                          |
| • Galatians 6:7-9         | Reaping & Sowing              |
| • Philippians 4:8-9       | Fixing Your Thoughts          |
| • Colossians 4:5-6        | Living among Non-believers    |
| • 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 | Always being Joyful           |

How can you use that passage to strengthen your walk?

3. Hebrews 6:10-12 speaks to “not becoming spiritually dull and indifferent.” What will you do when the study is over to avoid this?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Use this as another great opportunity to share the passage you picked from Paul’s writings and explain why it means something to you. Consider posting to social media for family and friends to see.

*Day Five*

At the end of chapter 6, the discussion turns to putting our spiritual aspirations in motion and working on our walk by:

1. Clearly defining our aspirations.
2. Speaking our vision.
3. Praying about it and seeking God's guidance.

1. Do you have a well-defined dream that God has given you? If not, write out all the details you have for now (and keep adding to it as He gives them to you).

2. How do the words of Romans 8:31 encourage you when going about your everyday life or when praying?

3. Read Psalm 40: 1-3. Then focus on the part of the scripture that states "Many will see what he has done and be amazed." What can you point to in your life that has changed and will make people sit up and notice?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Find someone in group to share your vision with and allow them to share theirs. Pray for each other.

*Day One*

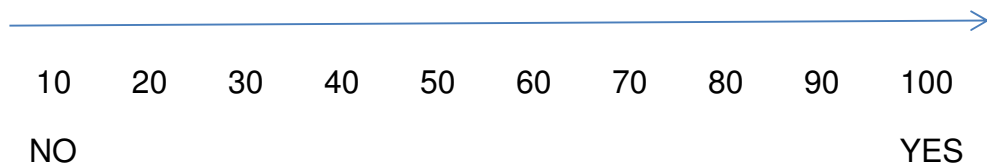
Fill in:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for \_\_\_\_\_ and not for disaster, to give you a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.” Jeremiah 29:11

1. What plans are you hoping God has for you? How will you feel if they don't happen? How can we balance dreaming big and accepting God's will?

2. Read Psalm 121:7-8. How do you justify these verses in light of all the things that have gone wrong in your life?

3. Now that we have reached chapter 7—let me ask: “Are you in a truly authentic, interactive relationship with Jesus?” Mark the percentage that best represents your answer.



Wherever you land on the scale, keep working your way to 100% knowing God doesn't expect perfection, just effort.

4. Is there someone you know that we can pray for as a group that still needs to be in a relationship with Jesus?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Post Jeremiah 29:11 on your mirror and memorize this verse.

\*Write down 3-5 people you feel need to hear about Jesus and pray for them each night this week.

*Day Two*

1. Go back and read Matthew 13:3-9. In this parable, Jesus spoke of 4 types of soil on which seed was thrown, with the seed representing the Word of God. Which soil are you most like? Explain.

- Seed fell on the footpath and was eaten by the birds
- Seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock and wilted in the hot sun
- Seed fell among the thorns and was choked out
- Seed fell on fertile soil and produced a crop

2. Which emotion plays the largest role in your life: pain or fear? Are there other emotions? Find two scriptures that address each emotion and be ready to share with the group.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Once you find scripture to fight against the emotions you are dealing with, place them all over your house.



*Day Three*

Let's work on pain today.

1. Reflect on Hebrews 5:7-8. Have you really contemplated the emotions Jesus went through? We are so quick to forget that even though He knew the plan of God for Him that He also felt the emotion of it. Pain was huge in Jesus' life:

- Death of His friend Lazarus
- Concern for Jerusalem
- He sweat drops of blood over impending death

How does that affect the way you see Him?

2. Meditate on Romans 8:28-29. How can pain be used for your good? Can you see a pattern in your life in which pain was used?

Reflect on these scriptures:

I am suffering and in pain. Rescue me, O God, by your saving power. Ps. 69:29

For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Rom. 8:22

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. Heb. 12:11

Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. 2 Cor. 7:9

3. Do any of the above passages influence your perspective on pain? What insights did you gain from them?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*In 1 Timothy 1:5, Paul is writing to encourage Timothy. Read the scripture passage and evaluate yourself on how your walk with Christ is gaining ground in these three areas: a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.

*Day Four*

Now, let's talk about fear.

1. What is your biggest fear?

2. In light of Peter's experience described in Matthew 14:28-31, are you going to get out of the boat or will you have a tendency to stay in?

According to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), "fear not" is recorded in the Bible about 53 times.

3. How do you feel about 2 Timothy 1:7? Describe an experience where you were able to gain control over the fear involved and in which you allowed the power, love, and self-discipline given to you by God to rule the situation.

4. Read Joshua 1:9. Are you comforted by this passage, and how?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Take some time to read through several passages surrounding God's command to "fear not" (e.g., they may be simply verses on fear). List two verses you can use as "go to" verses on this subject.

*Day Five*

1. Which Psalm do you relate to best (i.e., Psalm 142, 1, 100, 23), and why?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*As we prepare to end this study next week, re-evaluate the goals you have set for yourself once the study is over. Has anything changed? Do you feel anything particular rising to the top of your “must do” list?

*Day One*

1. Read Psalm 119:57-60. Notice Psalm 119:60 states: "I will hurry, **without delay**, to obey your commands." Relate something in your own life for which this is TRUE. What did you learn about yourself through that experience?

2. Meditate on Revelation 3:7. Have you surrendered to the fact that God is justified in shutting doors? Explain.

3. Are you sensing an urge from God to do something more? Tell us about it!

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Write a small prayer to God asking Him to give you strength to act without delay and the wisdom to discern when doors are opening and shutting.

*Day Two*

1. When you are really listening for God, what are the things you do? (e.g., prayer closet, early morning/late night quiet time). In other words, how do you “get alone” with God?

2. Can you relate to the words of the song *Worn*? What situation has you “worn”?

3. Read Isaiah 54:17. How do you relate to “no weapon formed against you”? What comes to mind? What weapons have you felt were coming against you now or in the past?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Concentrate on your quiet time with God. Work on doing more listening than talking.

*Day Three*

1. Ponder Psalm 37:6. What does this passage of Scripture mean to you? Is there a situation you need justice for? If not now, was there one in the past? How have you dealt with it?

2. Read Matthew 7:7. What kind of prayers has God answered that you now realize you prayed a long time ago? What period of time elapsed between your prayer and God's answer? What hope does that give you for current prayers you have prayed?

3. Are you ready to let go of the 'training wheels' and live a fully engaged Christian life? What will be your first step?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Are you prepared today to reverse course and do anything Christ ask? Have an honest discussion with God on this subject.



*Day Four*

1. Read Deuteronomy 7:9 and then fill in the statement below:

- The two keys to God's faithfulness and love is being a person who \_\_\_\_\_ Him and \_\_\_\_\_ His commands.

Considering this verse, do you feel lavished by God's love? Give details!

2. Revisit Exodus 3:9-11. Can you identify with Moses? Explain.

3. Which point on pages 100-101 of the book spoke to you the most, and why?

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*This week, share the point you chose from pages 100-101 with someone else (e.g., in person, social media).

*Day Five*

In 2 Kings 4:2, Elisha poses this question: "Tell me, what do you have in your house?" I think Elisha's question is both literal and figurative. Not only was he about to perform a miracle—he was assessing the widow's spiritual temperature.

1. Take Elisha's question to heart. What do **you** have in **your house** that when combined with faith can be used by God?
  
2. Read Hebrews 10:35-36. Are you ready to pray some God-sized prayers? What will be the subject of those prayers?
  
3. Are you ready to move with expectancy? Do you have any hesitancy left? How can we pray for you?
  
4. Express your favorite part of the study. Name one action item you will take as a result of this study.

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*CHALLENGE*

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\*Thanks for joining me on this journey. Consider posting a review for *Love Echoed Back* on amazon.com. In your review, tell others what insights you have gained because of reading the book and doing the study. To Jesus be the glory!