



HOW SWEET THE SOUND

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER ONE - The Doxology

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:7)

1. When was a time you felt truly accepted by a group of Christian people (beyond the walls of your church)? Describe it.
2. Why do you suppose worshiping God is such a uniting force for us?
3. How can you apply the uniting message of “The Doxology” to somewhere you’ll be this week? Maybe by inviting or including someone who might not feel comfortable or welcome?

CHAPTER TWO - Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14)

1. For what are you thankful today? Why?
2. When you “ponder anew what the Almighty can do,” what comes to mind? What amazes you about what God does for you?
3. What’s one thing you can do each day this week to give your own personal “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”? Maybe start a gratitude journal listing things you’re grateful for, or write a thank-you note telling someone you’re thankful God put them in your life.

CHAPTER THREE - Go Down, Moses!

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. (Galatians 5:1)

1. What makes you feel trapped or caged in? When you feel this way, what do you do?
2. How does it make you feel to know that Christ wants to save you from the places where you feel stuck? Describe it.
3. The lyrics of “Go Down, Moses!” declare: “let us all in Christ be free.” What does it mean to take Jesus up on that beautiful offer? Write out a prayer asking Him to help you do just that.





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CHAPTER FOUR - Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name. (Psalm 96:1-2 ESV)

1. What distractions and worries fill your head today?
2. Take a moment to look around you. What do you hear? What do you notice? What do you feel? Make a list of the incredible things around you. Praise God for them!

CHAPTER FIVE - Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12)

1. When was a time God did something amazing for you? Describe it:
2. How often do you remember what God did, and then go back and thank Him for it?
3. What will you use as your "Ebenezer" this week to recall how God has cared for you in the past?

CHAPTER SIX - It Is Well with My Soul

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7 ESV)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

1. Have you ever felt like you were drowning?
2. Write out one of the two verses from above and meditate on it.
3. Whenever the winds blow in your life this week, write them down here. Then recall Jesus halting that gale at sea. Finally, write over the "storms" you've written down, "It Is Well." If you need more space, feel free to grab an extra piece of paper and slip it in the book.





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CHAPTER SEVEN - My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. (Matthew 7:24–25 NLT)

1. Has anything knocked you off your feet recently? What was your gut reaction on how to handle the situation? Would you have preferred to handle it differently?
2. How can you build your life on Jesus this week (commit to daily prayer, to reading a certain amount of the Bible, to attending church or a church sponsored event) in order to better secure you when the next storm hits?

CHAPTER EIGHT - I Love to Tell the Story

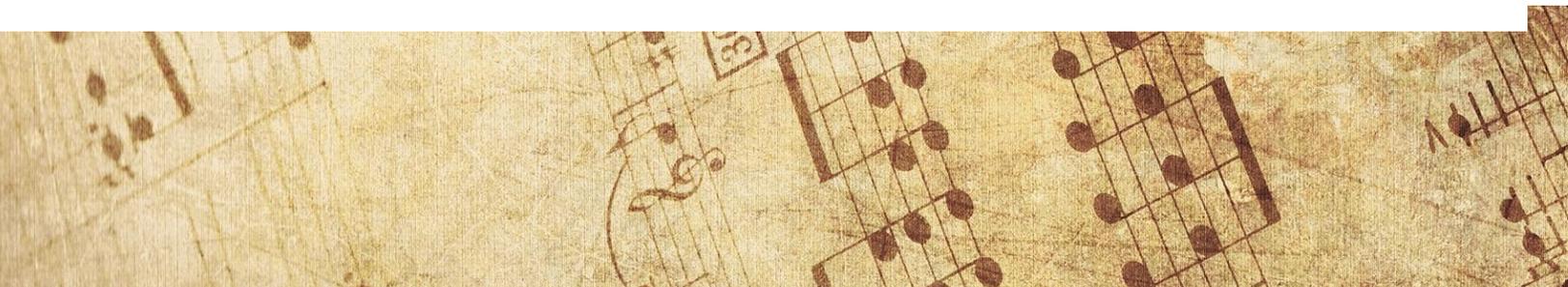
The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” (John 4:28–29 NLT)

1. What's your favorite story to tell?
2. Jot down a story about how Jesus has changed your life. Then commit to sharing the story or another way Jesus has changed you, how He loves you, how He's there for you with someone else this week.

CHAPTER NINE - Take My Life, and Let It Be

Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. (Romans 12:1 MSG)

1. Jot down some things you have scheduled for this week (this could be appointments, how you'll spend money, conversations you'll have, workouts, meals you have planned, etc.). Which of these to-dos do you find hardest to turn over to God?
2. Listen to “Take My Life” and ask God what in your life He'd like for you to try to turn over to Him this week?





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CHAPTER TEN - Be Thou My Vision

Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground. (Ephesians 6:13)

1. What battles are you fighting in this season?
2. How do you think envisioning Jesus by your side the next time you're confronted could help you fight a battle? Write out the scenario of how it would look different than a time you tried to fight the same battle on your own.

CHAPTER ELEVEN - Jesus Paid It All

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

1. Do you have anything in your past you wish you could erase?
2. Write "Jesus paid it all" over any of those past transgressions you listed above. Come back to this page throughout the week retracing, or writing over "Jesus paid it all" each day.

CHAPTER TWELVE - What a Friend We Have in Jesus

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

1. Have you ever lost a friend or felt lonely? How did that make you feel? Describe below.
2. How often do you turn to Jesus as your best friend?
3. What will you take to Jesus in prayer this week? Why not start now—write out something you want to talk to Him about and then pray the words out loud every day this week.





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CHAPTER THIRTEEN - Rock of Ages

God is good, a hiding place in tough times. (Nahum 1:7 MSG)

1. Can you remember a time you were in a life storm?
2. How has God been your Rock, a cleft or safe spot for you?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10)

1. Is there a "thorn" in your life right now that seems to be impeding you from moving forward?
2. Every time this issue comes up this week intentionally take a breath and picture Jesus—turn your eyes to Him. Keep track of:
 - the instances where you feel out of control or at the end of your rope;
 - what you did to intentionally focus on Christ (read a Bible passage, say a prayer, utter His name, picture His face); and
 - how this process of focusing made you feel.





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CHAPTER FIFTEEN - Were You There?

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. (John 19:1 NLT)

There they nailed him to the cross. (John 19:18 NLT)

And since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:42 NLT)

While it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. (John 20:1 NLT)

1. Do you own any crosses? What do you think of when you see them?
2. Read John 19:1-20:10. What part of the crucifixion sticks out the most to you?
3. When reflecting on "Were You There?," which part makes you tremble?
4. How will you stay focused on what Christ did for you on the cross throughout the week?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN - Nothing but the Blood

Now that we are set right with God by means of this sacrificial death, the consummate blood sacrifice, there is no longer a question of being at odds with God in any way. If, when we were at our worst, we were put on friendly terms with God by the sacrificial death of his Son, now that we're at our best, just think of how our lives will expand and deepen by means of his resurrection life! (Romans 5:9-10 MSG)

1. Can you think of a time you tried to make up for a mistake you made by yourself? How did it turn out?
2. How does it make you feel knowing "there is no longer a question of being at odds with God in any way" (Romans 5:9)?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN - Holy, Holy, Holy

Day and night they never stop saying: " 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come." (Revelation 4:8)

1. Read Revelation Chapter 4 (don't worry, it's super short). Close your eyes and imagine the scene of everyone bowing down and worshipping Jesus. Jot down any thoughts, words, or ideas that come to mind.
2. How can you focus on God's holiness this week?





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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN - The Lord's Prayer

This, then, is how you should pray:

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”*

(Matthew 6:9–13)

1. Do you have a go-to way you pray? Describe it here.
2. Do you follow the model Jesus taught us to pray? Praising Him, trusting Him, talking to Him about your daily needs, asking forgiveness, forgiving others, asking for protection, and then praising Him again? If not, which parts do you usually leave out / hope to work on? Commit to using The Lord's Prayer as a framework for your prayers this week.

CHAPTER NINETEEN - He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

The mystery is that people who have never heard of God and those who have heard of him all their lives (what I've been calling outsiders and insiders) stand on the same ground before God. They get the same offer, same help, same promises in Christ Jesus. The Message is accessible and welcoming to everyone, across the board. (Ephesians 3:6 MSG)

1. Name a group of people you struggle to love.
2. Name a specific person you struggle to love.
3. Write out a prayer thanking Jesus for loving you. Ask Him to help you love the ones you've mentioned above, to see them as His children, to embrace the idea of being nestled in His hands with them.





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CHAPTER TWENTY - Give Me Jesus

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28 ESV)

1. What do you think about when you first wake up?
2. What do you think about before you fall asleep?
3. Has there ever been a time when you wanted to throw up your hands (or your lunch) and say, “You can have this world!” When?
4. “Give Me Jesus” is a mantra we can have on repeat. How will you incorporate this phrase into your week? Try it below with something you might struggle with on a regular basis. (Like: When I drive carpool . . . give me Jesus!)

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE - The Old Rugged Cross

I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20 MSG)

1. What past accomplishments, “trophy,” are you holding on to in your life? What would it take for you to lay them down? This could mean throwing away old awards from work or high school. It could mean changing your signature line on your emails. It could mean biting your tongue every time you’re tempted to say, “My son is the quarterback” or “My husband set up this event” or “I actually won the award last year” or some such bragging rights.
2. Come up with an intentional plan to “lay down” at least one trophy this week. If it’s easy, lay down another one or two.





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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO - Silent Night

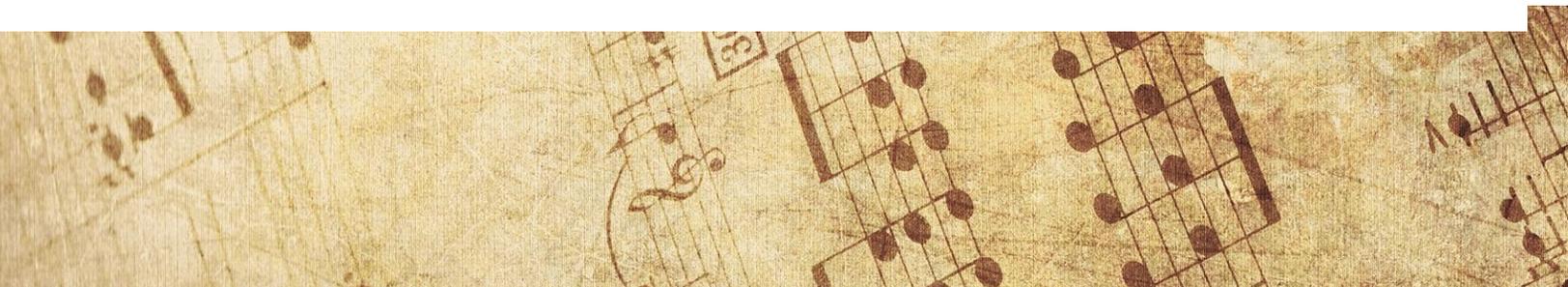
So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:16–20)

1. How often do you find silence in your life?
2. How can you find time this week to be still and silent with the Lord?

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE - He Will Hold Me

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:9–10)*

1. What concerns or prayers are swirling through your brain in this season? Jot at least three of them down.
2. God sees us everywhere we go. He sees our loved ones, and where their feet lead them. Next to the concerns you wrote down above write: "God sees me. He will hold me fast." For example, I could write: "I'm worried about my oldest. She's so stressed out and tense. I want her to find peace, relax, let go, and get a good night's sleep." And then write, "God sees her and all of the things stressing her out. He will hold her fast."





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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR - Blessed Assurance

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

1. What are some specific pages of your life story that make it unique?
2. What are some challenges you've faced in your personal narrative?
3. As you travel through this chapter of your life, where do you want to remind yourself of the “blessed assurance” that Jesus loves you and walks with you this week?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE - Go, Tell It on the Mountain

And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8 NLT)

1. What are things you naturally do that share Jesus— play Christian radio in your car? Pray before meals? Wear a cross necklace? List some.
2. As you go about your week, how can you plant seeds of faith doing your normal, natural things? This could be meeting a friend for lunch and stating that you are going to pray before you eat. You don't have to force them to join in, but intentionally close your eyes, bow your head, and speak a few words of thanks. Write down something and commit to it.





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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX - 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. (John 14:1 NLT)

1. Has anyone you relied on ever let you down? If so, how did you feel?
2. Do you trust Jesus? That He will never leave you? Always love you? If you do, write below “I trust you, Jesus.” And any time this week when things feel uncertain or overwhelming, why not say out loud, or write down again, “I trust you, Jesus.”
3. If you're struggling to trust Jesus, why not ask Him right now to grow your trust. You could write this phrase out instead of the one above. “Jesus, please help me grow my trust in you and your constant love. Amen.” Just like above, any time this week you feel wobbly, try saying or writing out this prayer to increase your trust again.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN - This Little Light of Mine

You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! (Matthew 5:14-16 MSG)

1. When reading this chapter, what light has God sparked reminded you about that He's sparked in your heart?
2. How do you plan on letting your little light shine this week?





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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT - In the Garden

He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). (John 20:15–16)

1. What is your favorite place to walk and talk with Jesus?
2. Is there a garden nearby—a rock garden, a public formal garden, a greenhouse, an art gallery with paintings of gardens, a vegetable garden where you can go? Commit to finding a garden, any kind, this week and to spending half an hour walking and talking with Jesus there. You could bring your Bible, a journal, your earbuds and favorite worship music, or stroll in silence. You choose how you feel you’ll best connect with Him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE - Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8–9)

1. Go on a treasure hunt today to catch some joy with your glove. Find one thing you see that brings you joy, one thing you touch that brings you joy, one thing you smell that brings you joy, one thing you hear that brings you joy, and one thing you taste that brings you joy.
2. Repeat every day this week.





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CHAPTER THIRTY - Amazing Grace

“How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.” (John 9:10-11)

1. How has Jesus opened your eyes? What do you see differently, the more you hang out with Jesus?
2. Knowing that Jesus died for you, that His grace is amazingly free, how does that change you? What were you before? What can you be now?
3. Thank Jesus for the sweet sound of His grace in a prayer—you can write it out here, in your journal, or say it in your head.

