THE FULLY LIVED LIFE

Rescuing Our Souls From all That Holds Us Back

Study Guide

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The Fully Lived Life: Rescuing Our Souls from All that Holds us Back
By Dr. Merry C Lin

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Instructions

Thank you for taking this first step to embark on a journey towards a full life. As you begin this video series, I urge you to slow down. Slow down and hear what the Lord wants to say to you through this study. Don’t rush this process. Go deep. And allow yourself to process and reflect. Journal your thoughts and capture your journey. And if you’re doing this series in a group study, choose to open up and share your story with others. The richness of your experience and your personal growth will depend very much on your decision to engage, reflect and share.

Before you begin this series, if you haven’t already, I invite you to pick up a copy of the book that this video series is based on, with the same title as this series (available at www.drmerrylin.com, www.amazon.com, or www.amazon.ca). While you can choose just to watch this video series and do the accompanying questions, you will find that reading along in the book as we do this study together will offer you a deeper level of insight and food for thought.

This study is meant to guide you on a self-reflective journey to help you make deep personal change for life. You will find the related reflection questions for each video segment in this study guide to help you go deeper, entitled Digging Deep. As you follow along, you will see which chapters of the book are relevant to the segment, so I would encourage you to take the time to reading those chapters prior to doing the reflection questions. Some questions will be great to do in a group study format, while other questions will be for you to do on your own. These exercises are offered for you as guidelines, not prescriptions, so don’t let yourself be overwhelmed by the tasks. Do as much or as little as you choose to do. Go back as many times as you need to. You pace it. Listen to God’s leading on what you choose to do or not do, as well as the timing.

Spend time journaling your answers to the reflection questions. Do all of your journaling in the same notebook or computer folder so you can track your progress as you finish each segment—and check back in a year or two to see how far you’ve come.

If you will do this, let yourself go deep into the unexplored places, those vulnerable areas... your Father—the one who loves you exactly the way you are and sees you perfectly—he waits for you. And I promise you that meeting him there will be life-changing.

Don’t ignore the call to freedom. Stop pretending. Your life depends on it.

I invite you now to open your heart to the possibility of more. Begin your journey of introspection and freedom. Seek out the life of fullness Jesus promises you. The first 5 segments will lay out the ways we are soul weary and the barriers that prevent us from living a full life. The next 3 sessions will draw you closer to God’s heart for you as you choose to return to the full life he offers. And the last 4 segments describes the life of fullness we are meant to live—a fully lived life.
The Fully Lived Life: Rescuing Our Souls from All that Holds us Back

**Digging Deep – Introduction**

1. As you watched the Introduction of this video series, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Where are you feeling stuck in your life right now?

3. If you’re unsure how to assess where you are, take just a moment to consider this quick self-assessment. Rate yourself on the following 5 point scale for the items below:

   1 = “Not at all true.”
   2 = “Sometimes.”
   3 = “Often.”
   4 = “Most of the time.”
   5 = “Completely true.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. I am juggling many responsibilities and feel like I can’t keep up with the demands in my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. When I stop, I feel physically and/or emotionally exhausted.</td>
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<td>3. I wish I could take a significant break to rest and reflect on my life with some “soul-searching.”</td>
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<td>4. My spiritual life feels dry and lifeless.</td>
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<td>5. I have a hard time sensing God’s presence in my life or experiencing his love for me.</td>
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<td>6. I seem to struggle with the same issues over and over in my life and don’t know why.</td>
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<td>7. I don’t like to think about negative or uncomfortable things for too long and distract myself to feel better.</td>
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<td>8. I’m uncomfortable with strong emotions and would rather focus on practical, sensible things.</td>
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<td>9. I feel stuck knowing I need to make some changes but unsure where to start.</td>
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<td>10. People rely on me and think of me as competent, but I don’t know how I feel or even if I care anymore.</td>
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**TOTAL SCORE**
✓ **If your total score is 10 to 20** you appear to have good self-awareness. Use this opportunity to learn how to truly live out what you know. Really allow yourself to absorb what the Lord says about living life to the full.

✓ **If your total score is between 21 to 30** your life could use some improvement. Take a look at the scores of 3 or higher to identify what you need to focus your attention on.

✓ **If your total score is between 31 and 50** take heed. You and people like you are living life in a less-than-full way God never intended. Seize this opportunity to recalibrate your life and believe the promise that when you dig deep, as uncomfortable as it may be, the rewards are sure to follow.
Digging Deep – Session 1
Can I Trust God?
(Chapters 1 and 2 of book)

God, are you avoiding me?
Where are you when I need you?
(Psalm 10:1, The Message)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. What is your story? Where have you experienced loss, trauma or pain? How has that shaped how you see God and his love for you? When was your heart broken and when has the Lord let YOU down? And out of that broken trust, how has that impacted your life today?

3. Set aside some time to reflect on your story—do it over several occasions if necessary. And pray before you start, something like: Lord, I come before you, ready to begin exploring my story with you. You know every aspect of my story, all the hidden parts that I haven’t even faced or understood. I acknowledge that I’m feeling (afraid, sceptical, wary, etc), but I choose to open myself to this process. Protect me from the lies of the enemy and help me to hear only your truth. Please help me to remember what you want me to remember, feel what you want me to feel, and hear what you want me to hear. Holy Spirit, come now and guide me as I write my story.

Take your journal notebook—or your computer—and write down the following headings:

- Birth and Infancy
- Toddler Years (2 to 4)
- Elementary Years (5 to 10)
- Early Adolescence (11 to 13)
- Teen Years (14 to 18)
- Young Adulthood (20s)
- Adulthood (30s to present)

Under each of the headings, begin to write down whatever you remember. Don’t worry about editing; just allow your words to flow. Reflect specifically on experiences that may have been traumatic or difficult. Think of events that you realize, looking back, have really shaped you. And don’t worry about getting this “right”—you will have plenty of opportunities later on to flesh this out more thoroughly. At this point, the key point is to explore your history.

The other important thing to remember is to stay safe. If at any point in this exercise, you are finding yourself overwhelmed with emotion, stop and pray, asking the Lord to comfort you and to show you what he wants you to know about that situation. Also, take some deep breaths—slowly in to a count of 4 and then slowly out to a count of 8. Do the deep breathing at least 10 times. If you’re unable to bring yourself to a place of equilibrium even after a time of prayer and breathing, stop this exercise and put it aside. Prayerfully consider whether you need to do this exercise in the safety of a therapeutic relationship.
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Digging Deep – Session 2
Why Am I So Afraid?
(Chapter 3 of book)

Fear and trembling seized me
and made all my bones shake.
(Job 4:14)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Imagine if fear were not an option in your life. How different would you be? How different would your life be? Think about all the ways that fear has held you back in our life and relationships.

3. Now let’s go even deeper with this. Begin with prayer, asking the Lord to show you your fearful ways. Remember, we’re very clever in how we disguise our fears so make sure you examine all the subtle ways that fear has a stronghold in your life.

   Lord, I confess that I have allowed fear to stop me from trusting you fully. I haven’t even admitted to myself how fearful I’ve been but instead have told myself I’m just being careful/cautious, or a perfectionist, or I don’t want to hurt people (continue with whatever justifications God brings to mind). Please show me all the ways that fear has had a stronghold in my life.

As you pray this, write down all the things that God brings to your mind. Remember, he wants you to be free of fear, so if you’re willing, he will guide you in identifying your strongholds.

4. Think through all the times in your life when fear has prevented you from moving forward. Think of all the people, situations and challenges you’ve avoided because of fear: Was it the confrontation with a friend or co-worker you’ve been avoiding? Was it in making a much-needed change to your career or job? Was it a school project or exam? Does fear show itself most in your marriage or relationships? With your kids? Your health? Your finances? Your schooling? Your future?

If your fear has escalated to the point where you’re experiencing anxiety, panic attacks, phobias (where you avoid specific things or situations), uncontrollable intrusive thoughts or compulsive behaviours, please reach out for professional help. Ask your doctor or pastor for a recommendation to a reputable therapist who can help you break free from your bondage to fear.
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Digging Deep – Session 3

Why is Nothing Going My Way?
(Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of book)

Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self.
(Matthew 16:24–25, The Message)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. How many of us—if we’re honest with ourselves—can point to decisions we’ve made in rebellion that have borne poisonous fruit in our lives and the lives of our loved ones? What are you running away from? Which relationships are suffering from your unwillingness to be stretched? Be honest with yourself: how has your rebellion cost you and others in your life?

3. Review your story from session 1. Think about all of your experiences and consider where rebellion played a part in your suffering—either the rebellion of someone else or your own. Consider the cost you or a loved one has had to pay. Think back to the generations before you; is there a generational pattern of rebellion in your family line? What damage in your life right now is as a direct result of these generational patterns?

4. Where are you refusing to surrender control of your life? Look at the pain points of your life today, the areas that cause you the greatest stress, anxiety and worry—could God be asking you to surrender to him in that area? Is it in your marriage? Your singleness? Your children? Your childlessness? Career? Finances? Health? Think about the unanswered prayers that cause you the greatest anxiety or disappointment—is God asking you to surrender this to him?

5. How often have you relied on your intellect and “common sense” instead of faith? In what areas of your life does unbelief reign? Your marriage? Your children? Your work? Your health? Your dreams and desires? Your sin struggles? Ask God to show you where you’ve secretly believed that nothing will ever change in an area of your life. And ask him for the faith to trust him to take over.
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Digging Deep – Session 4
Why Can’t I Measure Up?
(Chapters 7 and 10 of book)

You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.
(Matthew 23:27)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Are you tired of living in bondage to your version of religion Jesus never intended? Are you weary from all your effort? Are you fearful of disappointing God and others and maintain an empty shell of duty and work? Share examples of where you see this in your life.

3. Take the time now to examine how you live out your faith—as religion or as relationship. Ponder the way you see God. How has your view of God shaped the way you live out your faith?

4. Do you find yourself secretly longing for acceptance, affirmation, and love? What are your “rules” for love? What’s your definition of “true love”?

5. Do you have a craving for anything? This can be a good thing—such as enjoying others and revelling in the good gifts that God gives us. But where it eventually becomes a betrayer is if these things take the place of God in your life—they become your only source of “joy” and satisfaction. These good things can become bondage in your life if you haven’t let God fill you. What is God stirring in your heart right now? Ask God this honest question: Search my heart, o God; can you reveal to me anything that’s not pleasing to you? Are there any addictions or idols the Lord is bringing to your mind?

6. Reflect on the pain in your life right now. What are you doing with it? Have you been running away from it? Have you been relying on something other than God to salve it? What does it reveal? What might God be up to? How might he redeem it? Remember, don’t waste your pain!

If there’s anything you know is a stronghold in your life and you are having difficulty breaking free, do yourself a favor and reach out for help from a trustworthy source—a Christian counsellor, therapist or psychologist could offer compassionate solutions.
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Digging Deep – Session 5
Do I Have to Fake It to Make It?
(Chapters 8 and 9 of book)

For we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.
(Isaiah 28:15b)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Are you longing to drop your masks and stop faking it? Think about all the times in your life where you felt you had to be “on,” where you couldn’t be honest with how you really felt, when you chose to pretend to be someone you weren’t. What’s the cause of that?

3. If you don’t know whether you wear masks, consider these questions: If someone were to ask you to describe yourself, could you talk about your strengths and weaknesses with confidence? In other words, do you know who you really are? Are you always the same in how you act regardless of the situation you’re in? When you are around others, do you ever feel strained and uncomfortable, hard to relax? Has anyone ever told you that they thought you were one way but then when they got to know you better, realized you were another way? Has anyone ever commented on how you act differently around various people? You ever act like you don’t care what others think but really, you’re feeling hurt? You ever pretend to like someone you really don’t?

4. What might some of your masks be? The I’ve-got-it-all-together mask? The I’m-a-victim mask? The I’m-a-good-Christian mask? Think about different situations in your life—work, school, church, home, with friends, with family, etc.—what mask might emerge during those times?

5. When we hide behind masks, we protect ourselves from the possible judgement of others. Deep down, we struggle with feelings of shame, self-rejection and sometimes, even self-hatred, and so we hide. How true would you say this is in your life? How has shame played a role in your life and how has it held you back in relationships with others and especially with God?

6. Will you choose to invite God into your shame and allow his grace and love to bring healing in your life? Pray together, or on your own, and choose now to lay your shame before him, lay before your Father all that you have kept hidden in the dark.
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Digging Deep – Session 6
Death Before Life
(Chapters 11 and 12 of book)

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
(John 12:24, NASB)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Where are you in your story? Are you in a season of winter, or dying to old things? Has God brought you into a place of darkness?

3. What activities, tasks, relationships are draining the life away from you and producing no fruit? Take a look at all the unhealthy branches of your life—the travel, the committees, the unfinished projects, the obsessions, the sins, the diversions, the proliferation of responsibilities that aren’t really yours.

4. Look at your typical week or your activities over the last month or so. Write down everything you did—or tried to do—all of your tasks, responsibilities and meetings. Ask yourself honestly whether these things are bearing fruit or just sapping energy. Cut away those things that are rooted in your insecurities, fears, idols—anything other than God. Be ruthless in cleaning out the deadwood. Take the time now so that your soul will be renewed and ready to bear the seeds of the new fruit and new life God wants to bear in you.

5. Where is your place of pain? Check to discover the pains you’ve been ignoring and allow the Holy Spirit to begin revealing your secret places of loneliness, grief, anger, betrayal and abandonment—all the times you have felt let down by God. Consider the personal history you journaled in Session 1 and instead of just writing about it to yourself, write a letter to God. Tell the Lord how you feel as you think about all the pain points of your life. Be honest with how you feel.

6. Ask him to reveal the ways you allowed walls to build around your heart, times you haven’t been fully honest with God or yourself. Lay it all out before him journaling, talking, crying or even shouting out loud. Paint, draw or pound a piano to work it through with your Father—just get real and talk to your Father, uncensored and raw.
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Digging Deep – Session 7
What’s Love Got to Do With It?
(Chapters 13 and 14 of book)

What marvellous love the Father has extended to us!
Just look at it—we’re called Children of God! That’s who we really are.
(1 John 3:1a, The Message)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Think back to your early years and consider what your home environment was like. What was the emotional climate like in your home? Was it warm and affectionate? Cool and distant? Harsh and angry?

3. What was your mother like as a mother? How did she show you her love? What was your father like as a father? How did he show you his love? How did your parents show love to one another (if they were together)? How were your emotions handled when you were sad or angry? How did your parents comfort you? How responsive were they to your emotional needs? Were there any other influential adult figures in your life growing up? How did they impact you?

4. Think about your siblings if you have any. What role did you play in your family? Peacekeeper? Scapegoat? Black sheep? The good child? If you have trouble remembering this, look at some old family photos. Look at the expressions on your faces and the physical contact between you and your family (or lack thereof). Think about how your family of origin is today—the roots of yesterday are often still there today.

5. Your Father’s love for you and his purposes are woven into every aspect of your story. Review what you wrote down in session 1, and consider how you’ve described your family above. What are the themes of the broken parts for you? Abandonment? Rejection? Loneliness? Shame?

6. Now take the time to think about all the good experiences of your life—the blessings, the unexpected opportunities—all of the highpoints. To help you organize this, you may find it helpful to draw a time line. At the far left of the line, write “birth” and at the far right of the line, put your current age. Then as you consider all of the experiences of your life—both good and bad—you can plot them on your lifeline. All of the positive experiences are plotted on top of the line; all of the negative ones are written below the line—like mountain tops and valleys.

7. Go back now over your lifeline and see the handprint of God. Prayerfully ask your Father to show you. What are his answers to the themes of your life? You can write it down verbally or if you’re more creative, use pictures, stickers, song lyrics and put them throughout your lifeline to help you see visually the hand of God throughout your life.
8. Will you choose to seek out the truth of his great love for you? Will you choose to accept your identity as our Father’s beloved? If not, what is preventing you from doing so? Ask the Lord to reveal your heart to you and show you the barriers to accepting your true identity as his beloved.

If you are experiencing overwhelming pain as you face into the wounding experiences you had as a child, I want you to stop right now. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Take a deep breath in through your nose, saying Mar-a-na-tha as you breathe in (it means come Jesus come, or the Lord is coming), hold it for 4 counts, then breathe out slowly through your nose, saying Mar-a-na-tha to yourself. Do this for five minutes if you can. You can change the phrases you say in your head, using various 4-count sayings: I love you, Lord. I need you Lord. Thanks for your love. Say whatever phrases help you center on God and calm you. Then, read the following passages (do this even if you’re able to complete the family questions above—this exercise below is great for everyone):

_Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine! You are precious in My eyes since you are honoured and I love you...the mountains may be moved and the hills may shake, but my lovingkindness will not be removed, and my covenant of peace will not be shaken._ (Isaiah 43:1, 4; 54:10, NASB)

Speak these words out loud. Carry them with you. Commit them to memory. And as you do, ask God to show you how he feels about you. Even if you don’t sense anything at first, be patient like the persistent widow; keep asking him to show you how he feels about you. And then pay attention to what you see, hear, or experience inside of yourself and the world over the next weeks. Take time to record what you notice, the messages of love he gives you through nature, music, through others around you, and even through the good gifts he gives you. Savour the taste of being loved. Take as long as you need to envelope yourself in the truth of your Father’s unprovoked love for you. You were meant to experience it directly.
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Digging Deep – Session 8
The Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth
(Chapters 15 and 16 of book)

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 8:31b-32)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Now we come to a critical point in your journey. Hopefully, if you’ve been engaging in the process of working through your own history and the ways you disconnect from God, you are now ready to face down the lies and wrong mental agreements that have blocked you from believing the truth of God’s Word and his love for you. Grab your journal and begin to still yourself before God. Begin by praying,

   Lord, I come before you now, confessing that I have believed lies about myself, about you and about others. Please forgive me, Father. I long to know the truth. Please protect my time with you from the attempts of the enemy to thwart this and keep me in bondage to his lies. Send as many angels as are needed to protect me, and even now, sweep through this entire room and remove any evil that may be trying to cause disruption or harm to me. I want only your truths, Lord.

   Holy Spirit, I invite you now to come and guide me in this process. Help me feel what you want me to feel, see what you want me to see, hear what you want me to hear. Come now, Lord Jesus, I place this time in your hands.

   Now with your journal in hand, pray, Lord, please reveal to me now, any lies or wrong mental agreements that I have held. Then write down whatever comes to your mind. Continue on until you have a sense that you have come to the end—at least at this point (you may find that God will lead you to do this exercise multiple times as you continue on in your journey when he feels you are ready to deal with certain strongholds in your life).

   Once you have completed the list of wrong mental agreements, begin to say out loud,

   In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I renounce the beliefs, thoughts and attitudes I have held in my mind when I committed to agree with myself that _______ (list off all of the mental agreements that the Lord brought to mind earlier). I break the power, authority, effects and consequences of these agreements in my life and I declare them to be null and void. They are all broken now in the name of the true Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I also renounce any curses or vows I may have made with myself, either knowingly or unknowingly. Lord, please show me what truths you have for me to replace these wrong mental agreements.
Again, write down everything that God brings to mind, asking him for more until you sense that there is no more. Once you have your new list, pray,

*I replace all of my wrong mental agreements with the truth that *________ (list all the truths that God has brought to your mind). I choose to live out of the truths that you have revealed to me. Thank you, Father, that you are the God of truth and that you have given me the Holy Spirit to lead me to all truth. Help me to continue living in your truth and to be free.*

3. Think about all the things, situations and people you hold dearly to your heart. List them all in your journal. Nothing about this is easy. But do it praying that God would show you anything else that is occupying a piece of your heart, anything that is interfering in your full dependence on him: Your time, your career, your work, your aspirations, your body, your health, your tongue and the words you use, your mind and your intellect, your will and your desires, your emotions, your possessions, your relationships, your reputation, your future, your hopes and dreams, your money, your life. As God brings things or people to mind that take a priority in your life, confess your dependence on these things or people. And as you ask for forgiveness for putting these things first, choose to surrender all of this to God.

4. Ask yourself: Are there any “compartments” of my life over which I am reserving the right to exercise control? Have I surrendered all that I am and all that I have to God? Is there any part of myself and my life that I am knowingly holding back from God? Have I released my relationships to him, especially my spouse and children? Am I trying to control their lives? Is there anyone I “love” in a way that is not pure? Am I holding on to any friendships or relationships God wants me to relinquish? Do I own anything I wouldn’t be willing to part with if God were to take it or ask me to give it up? Am I a wise steward of the resources God has entrusted? Am I content with what he has given me? Do I consistently seek to know and do the will of God in the practical, daily matters of life? Is there anything I know God wants me to do that I have not done or am not doing? Do I become resentful when things don’t go my way? Am I stubborn? Demanding? Controlling? As God convicts you of the areas of your life that you still hold fast to, choose now to surrender these things to him, and ask him for the courage and strength to live out that surrender in your life on a daily basis.
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Digging Deep – Session 9
Pursuing Your Best Friend
(Chapter 17 of book)

I have now seen The One who sees me.
(Genesis 16:13)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. Think about your church history, if any. What have you been taught about hearing from God? What are some of the theological questions you have about experiencing God’s presence?

3. If an intimate relationship with God isn’t what you’re currently experiencing, ask yourself what is preventing you from pursuing a friendship with God with all your heart? Ask yourself: Do I enjoy my time with God? Do I wish for more of it? Or does it often feel like a duty? Is God’s Word shaping me? Or am I mostly influenced by other things—work, moods, circumstances, others?

4. Think back to times in your life when, in retrospect, you really felt that God was guiding you or speaking to you. It may even be before you became a Christ follower, but you realize now were part of God drawing you to know him. Share some of your experiences with others, to make it more real and allow those experiences to become part of your testimony.

5. What surprised you most about what the speaker said about how God speaks to us? What does his voice sound like to you? What competing voices have resounded in your head? How do you typically experience God?

6. If spending time with your Father in silence and solitude is a foreign activity for you, don’t beat yourself up for feeling uncomfortable. This is not about being more “spiritual. Start small. Begin by setting aside five minutes to quiet yourself before God. Pick a place that fills you with peace, whether it’s outside sitting in your garden with a cup of tea, or in a quiet place hidden somewhere in your home. Sit in your car if you have to! It doesn’t matter where, as long as you can be alone and undisturbed. Unplug yourself from the internet, cell phone, etc. Sit quietly before God. There’s no need to say anything to him or do to anything. When I first started practicing silence and solitude, I found it helpful to focus on a phrase that helped me stay centered on God, otherwise my busy mind would distract me into a thousand different directions. I experimented with various phrases like, Lord, I long for you and More of you, less of me.
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Digging Deep – Session 10

Listen to Your Heart

(Chapter 18 of book)

*I run in the path of your commandments,*

*for you have set my heart free.*

(Psalm 119:32, WEB)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. If you had permission to do what you really want to do, what would you do? If you could change anything in your life, what would it be? Don’t ask or think about how right now, just listen to your heart. What is written in your heart? What makes you come alive?

3. What—or who—is killing your heart right now in your life?

4. What is preventing you from listening to your heart? Is it your history, bad theology, your fears, lies that you have believed about yourself and God?

5. Take some time right now to ask your Father to show you his heart for you, and then to begin to show you your own heart. Ask him to show you the lies that are preventing you from breaking free and then commit your heart to him—your emotions, your dreams, your longings, your desires, your voice.
1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. What’s stirring in your heart now as you think about what the speaker is challenging us to do? Is the Lord convicting you of a cautious life lived in fear of sinning? Is he showing you your buried talents? Ask him to show you all the ways in which your fear of his wrath and judgement—as well as the judgement of other Christians—has shackled you from living boldly for him. As he reveals your fears to you, confess this to your Father, and choose now to give that all up to him.

3. If you can, gather some pictures of yourself as a young child. See if you can find any ones where you’re playing with abandon. What are you doing in those pictures? Do you remember what you dreamed of doing as a child? Back in the days when you could slay dragons, rescue damsels in distress or sail the ocean on quests around the world, what adventures did you imagine yourself pursuing?

4. Now think about all the things you’ve gravitated towards throughout your life. What talents did you show at an early age or had an aptitude for? Was it drawing? Writing? Dancing? Sports? Telling people about Jesus? Praying for your friends?

5. Now fast forward throughout your life—teens, young adulthood until now. Think about all of the dreams you didn’t pursue. Think about the choices you’ve made along the way. Any regrets? Have you been living a “safe” life? No risks? Would people describe you as “nice” because you avoid conflict at all costs? Have you avoided speaking truth that needed to be said, words that needed to be shared about your Father?

6. This exercise isn’t meant for you to condemn yourself for your lost opportunities, but to clear your account with your Father. Confess all of the choices you’ve made during the course of your life—both big and small—to bury your talents. Keep a short account with God—as you write down all that your Father is showing you of how you’ve buried your talents—remember to keep coming back to this list as you make decisions—both big and small—for your life moving forward. And ask him for the courage to “sin boldly” and watch what he does in your life.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9)
For I am about to do something new. 
See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? 
I will make a pathway through the wilderness. 
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. 
(Isaiah 43:19, NLT)

1. As you watched the video, what was stirring in your heart? What specific things did the speaker say that really resonated with you?

2. If a life of adventure with God is unfathomable to you, ask God to show you what is preventing you from living a life full out for him. Have you given up on God? Are you filled with doubts, fears and questions that are preventing you from trusting him? Or is your life so busy that you don’t have time to listen to his call to embark on an adventure with you? What are the deep disappointments or hard knocks or tedious stretches that you might have to endure this side of beginning your adventure with God? What does a life of adventure with God look like for you?

3. Now here is where you need to abandon all doubts that hold you back and take the time to listen to your heart. If you were to list three things that you would love to do—if money were no object and there were no practical issues to consider—what would they be? (You can choose to say win a lottery, but I want you to dig deeper and consider your dreams, not just having lots of money or material wealth.) If you could be anything you wanted to be, what would that be? If this is hard for you to do, take your time and don’t give up. Some of us have never been taught to dream and so it’s hard for us to even know our own heart and passions. Just keep praying for God to show you your heart and the adventures he has in store for you. Keep coming back to this exercise until you can answer these questions. Talk to friends and family who know you well.

4. If you know the three things you’d love to do, I want you to commit them to the Keeper of your dreams now. And pray continuously for these things. And lest you think these dreams are for the very distant future, I want you to ask your Father to begin to lay out the path for you to pursue your adventures. Ask him: What are you asking me to give up? (Write down everything that comes to mind.) What are you asking me to risk right now? (Write down all that the Lord shows you.)

5. Your dreams will be rooted in who God has created you to be. So do you know your personality? Your passions? Your likes and dislikes? Your values? What makes you, you? If you don’t know the answers to these questions, choose to find out! Ask your closest friends and family who know you well—ask them what your strengths and weaknesses are.