

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1: Surrender to God

1. When have you ever felt a need to pretend or hide? Can you identify when this may have first started? Why do people continue in the pattern of pretending?
2. What is the difference between doing things for God and being with God? Is the distinction important?
3. The author wrote, “What you do doesn’t determine who you are in the core of your being, but it does reflect what you believe (right or wrongly) is at the core of your being.” Think about this concept and name a few of the things this reveals you believe at your core.
4. What might we have trouble being honest with God about? What, if anything, does this reveal about us in other relationships?
5. When have you ever seen God in “disguise”? Describe your moment of recognition that came in the moment or later.
6. For it to be well with our souls, why ought we not to skip around in this hymn? What difference would it make if our sin were nailed to the cross “in part”?

7. What is the great challenge in surrendering? Why does or doesn't it come naturally to us? How could our personality affect our ability to surrender? What about our perspective on what we are surrendering to?

Chapter 2: Encounter Your Journal

1. Have you ever written a poem? What was the circumstance that prompted you to write something? Why do people journal or not?
2. What are some of the ways you would benefit by bringing your heart to paper? What are some of the reasons you're resistant?
3. Why should a journal be off-limits to others? Have you respected or violated that in the past?
4. Do you find it easier to *do* or to *be*? Are you more prone to tell yourself why you can't do something or to try to find ways you can?
5. How can a journal serve as a "therapist's couch"? How about as a spiritual tool?
6. What are some of the ways your day might change if you recorded some of your observations or things you were grateful for? What about ways it might improve your parenting or your marriage?
7. Name a few ways that just being aware of our choices can change our perspective?
8. Creativity can be strengthened by journaling. Specifically, how can you increase your creativity by using a journal?

Chapter 3: Listen to Your Longings

1. What longings do you have in your life? What are the big

things that are genuine disappointments? How have you reacted to them?

2. If you are honest, has the net effect of the disappointments driven you away from God—or brought you closer?
3. What happens to us when we fall for the false response to longings and become “spectators”? Will this free us from pain in our lives?
4. What happens when we become hypercritical “evaluators”? Will this way of approaching disappointment lead us to more joy?
5. Do you agree with the distinction between wishes, dreams, and longings? Do these categories accurately reflect what you know of yourself and others?
6. What does it mean to respond positively to the “holes” that are supposed to be there?
7. How can we avoid “medicating” our longings and use them instead as “treasure maps” to help us discover what God has in store for us?

Chapter 4: Embrace Your Beauty

1. What would it take for us to trust that the Lord has gently created each of us to be beautiful in our own way?
2. Where do most women you know get their images of beauty? How have those images been formed in the past? How are they still being formed today?
3. Think about occasions in your own life when you were at odds with the world’s ideals of beauty. What false responses should we avoid?
4. Do you agree that women are torn over how we see ourselves? If so, what does that do to us inside?

5. What negative voices do you hear in your life about how you look (e.g., from your past, your family, our culture)? What happens to us when we listen to such voices rather than to God?
6. What could it look like in practice to be comfortable with who God made us to be? To be God's "beloved"? To embrace our beauty?
7. In what ways might our lives change if we pressed deeper into such truths?
8. How do we discover the secret of being an alive, passionate woman in this world?
9. Are there women in your life—a daughter, a sister, a friend, a colleague—who need encouragement to discover the beauty God has given them? How will you share with them what you have learned here about real beauty?

Chapter 5: Interview Your Anger

1. Do you agree that women today are not allowed to be angry? Do you sense a double standard? If so, where do you see evidence of this? How does it make you feel?
2. Why do you think we may be afraid of being perceived as angry?
3. What would it mean if you were angry?
4. In what ways do people often try to deny their anger but only end up expressing it in different forms, such as a critical spirit?
5. Are there places in your life where you are mad at God? How are you handling them?
6. Psychologists tell us that anger is made up of fear, frustrations, and hurt. What might you be fearful of? Where have your feelings been hurt? Why are you frustrated?

7. Have you slowed down enough to interview yourself and take stock of yourself emotionally? Have you shared the results with a close friend?
8. What are the benefits of journaling that make it a key tool in the interviewing process? What role, if any, does it play in your life?
9. What are the main “fuel dumps” in your life?
10. Where are you in danger of infuriating yourself by compromising yourself?
11. Is there a relationship in your life that was broken long ago that has you “limping” today? What can you do to “set it” right?

Chapter 6: Savor Your Sexuality

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your sexual relationship with your husband? Why is it (or is it not) an accurate expression of who you are? On that same scale, how well do you feel “known”? In what way do you see the two questions as related?
2. Why do you think men take sexual postponement (not necessarily rejection) so personally? In what areas can we relate to this personal rejection as women?
3. Have you ever been tempted to “go away” during sex? Why do you think this occurred or still occurs? Are there strategies that you can consider after reading this chapter that might help combat this?
4. How honestly have you dealt with any sexual pain from your past? What are some of the difficulties past sexual experiences can bring into a current relationship? How can we know if we are free from the past?

5. How connected do you feel to your senses? What sense are you most connected to and why that particular one? Are there ways you can think of to awaken your heart and soul to a few others? List them here.
6. What are your least favorite things about your body? How does your opinion of these areas shape your sexual expression—publicly and privately? Are there any of these dislikes that could be easily changed?
7. What are the areas of your life that you feel the best about? In other words, not thinking just of your body, what things would you say you do well? How does your opinion of these areas shape your sexual expression—publicly and privately?
8. How can you break a cycle of shame and rejection over sex if you're stuck? What can embracing the *imago dei* in your soul and in your marriage do to help?

Chapter 7: Celebrate Your Friendships

1. Why might we find it hard to celebrate in general? Did you grow up feeling celebrated in your family? Why would that even make a difference?
2. What would you say is your greatest need in friendship? To have fewer, closer friends or more friends or just a couple of good friends? Who are some of your friendship models?
3. How did you feel about friendship growing up? Was it easy for you to make and keep friends?
4. In what way are friendships with adult women harder or easier than the friendships we had as girls?
5. If you identified in your journaling that you are too busy for friendships, what factors have contributed to this conclusion? What are ways to begin to change them?

6. What does it look like to push our husbands or boyfriends into a role that a good girlfriend should play? What are the warning signs we could heed before we do it again?
7. Why is a friendship with God so easy to take for granted? What is the cost of doing so?
8. In the chapter, Audrey's friend made a choice not to have flowers because flowers attract bees. What choices have you made out of fear that cause you to miss something beautiful?

Chapter 8: Change Your World

1. Think over your life. In all your busyness, how can you make sure you have your priorities in place—things to which you are purposefully, passionately committed? If you don't know what those things are, how can you begin to find them?
2. How do you pursue your "passion," what the author calls "the one thing" without becoming selfish?
3. Is it only a "man's thing" to pursue purpose and significance in life? What does our culture say? What does God say?
4. How do you and your friends measure up to the author's observation about women who complete all the tasks but have no joy in the process?
5. If you could have any life in the world, whose would it be and why? What is God calling you to do?
6. What are some of the ways that women postpone their lives and put them on hold by avoiding their passion?
7. What do you think it means when we talk about changing the world we live in? Is this happening in your life? What are some of the ways you know that you are changing the world?
8. Discuss how you and perhaps a few of your close friends may pursue this goal more consistently.

9. Try a “Receiving Praise Day.” When someone gives you a compliment, just receive it. No ifs, ands, or buts—just a simple thank you, period.

Chapter 9: Enrich Your Relationships

1. What seems most important and relevant to your life in the author’s distinction between knowing and doing? What relationship could benefit the most if you could move from knowing to doing? Could too much “knowledge” be hurting us in specific ways you can think of personally?
2. Why can’t marriage eliminate loneliness?
3. In what areas are you tempted to “stuff” the holes to medicate the pain of empty places? Can you identify where those holes may have come from? What are some strategies to employ that will allow them to heal?
4. In what ways do we look to others to determine our worth? While we may know they can’t, and they may know as well, what can keep us from doing this going forward?
5. Can you think of a time early in your life that your trust in someone was betrayed or broken? How do you think this shaped your life and/or your ability to trust?
6. What are some of the qualities generally found in a trustworthy person? What is the best way to determine if someone is worthy of trust?
7. Which relationships can you think of that need to be fortified or enriched by trust? How can you add this important ingredient?

Chapter 10: Enjoy Your Freedom

1. What evidence would support whether your heart is growing or shrinking as you’ve gotten older?

2. Why would it be considered freedom to take someone at his or her word? Why do you find it easy or difficult to take what people say at face value?
3. Would freedom in your life look like taking more time for yourself or making more time for other activities that don't focus on yourself? Why can each be considered freedom?
4. What kind of freedom is there in resisting the urge to control how you appear to others? Why does it take more energy to manage what other people think?
5. Describe a time in your life when you felt you may have needed the "walls."
6. In the directed journaling, you were instructed to write about three prisons of your own making. Pick one prison that has had an especially powerful hold over you and write down some of the whispers you've heard inside that cell. Have you ever retreated to prison for safety?
7. Take one area of your life (could be financial, professional, relational, even physical) where you hunger for more freedom. Look at each of the components carefully, and think through the price, form your plan, and pray for the power to move toward freedom in this one area.
8. What would a few items on "A Day in the Life of Your Freedom" look like? How could your choosing to be free in this way affect the lives of those around you, positively or negatively?