

Chapter 1: The Promise

Read “The Promise” - Chapter 1 of Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Did the promise in Chapter 1 remind you of a promise that you have made to yourself? If so, what was that promise? What caused you to make it?
3. My promise cost me the joy and satisfaction of a relationship with Mark. In fact, that promise cost me many years of intimacy with people I respected and admired. What is the price that you have paid or are paying for your promise?
4. In John 8:44, Jesus tells us about Satan. He says: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.”

Satan’s weapons are lies, and he tries to use those lies to destroy our lives. My promise was based on the lie that God could not heal the pain of losing someone I loved. Because I didn’t believe that God could heal my heart, I thought I had to build a wall of protection around it so that I could never be hurt that badly again.

Do you recognize the lies on which your promise is based? If so, what are they?

5. Jesus said, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31 & 32)

God touched my heart with the truth of His Word and exposed the lies that I was believing. He reminded me, “I will not fail you or forsake you.” (Joshua

1:5). He also brought the verse to mind: "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) The truth in those verses was just what I needed to free me from the lies of my promise. As the truth took root in my heart, my heart began to heal and my life began to change.

Can you think of a truth in the Bible that contradicts the lie on which your promise is based? What is that truth? What Bible verse(s) convey(s) that truth?

(Note: Learning what's in the Bible is a lifelong process. Don't be discouraged if you can't think of a truth or find a verse that applies. If you can't, ask someone else who has studied and knows the Bible. Or you can look up Bible verses by key words online. There are several websites you can use. One of my favorites is www.BibleGateway.com.)

6. If you found a verse, write it down and memorize it. Then put it where you will see it and be reminded of its truth on a regular basis.
7. Sometimes we know the truth, but that truth hasn't changed our behavior. That's when we need to take a deep breath, step out, and act on what we know to be true. When we do, our fear begins to disappear and our hearts and lives begin to change.

Is there something you can do to act on the truth you identified? If so, what is it? When will you do it?

Chapter 2: There You Are

Read “There You Are”– Chapter 2 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Every one of us has felt the pain of rejection. Who has rejected you in the past? What did they do that caused you to feel rejected?
3. How did you respond?
4. Where are you in the process of forgiving that person (or those people)?
5. Most of us have rejected someone in some way in the past. Who have you rejected?
6. What caused you to reject or disapprove of them?
7. How did you communicate your rejection or disapproval? (These can be behaviors that you meant to exhibit or behaviors you did not mean to exhibit.)
8. Place yourself in that person’s shoes. How do you think they felt when they sensed your rejection?
9. Many of us have a certain standard in our minds about the people we are willing to love and accept. However, the Bible gives us specific instructions about who we should love.

In Matthew 5: 43-48, Jesus says: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

In Romans 12:16, Paul says: "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."

Read Matthew 25:31-46. What does Jesus tell his disciples in verse 45?

10. Based on Matthew 25:45, we can say that our love for Jesus is measured by the love we have for the person we love the least. How can you change your behavior toward the person you love the least to reflect your love for Jesus?
11. Although it's important to understand how we need to change our behavior toward others, true and lasting transformation does not come from focusing on changing our behavior. It comes from changing our minds. In his letter to the Romans Paul tells us: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

When we renew our minds with the truth, our behavior will be transformed.

Philippians 2:3 & 4 tells us, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

What can you do to renew your mind with the truth of Philippians 2:3 & 4?

(Some suggestions: You can memorize Philippians 2:3 & 4 or write it down and put it where you will see it on a regular basis. You can do a study on what the Bible says about love. You can also pray and ask God to renew your mind in this area.)

12. Chapter 2 of *Press Play* talks about becoming a "There You Are" person. If you really were a "There You Are" person how would your actions toward others change?
13. If you were a "There You Are" person, how do you think people would respond to you? In turn, how would your life would change? How would the lives of people you interact with change?

Chapter 3: Eyes to See

Read “Eyes to See”– Chapter 3 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

We all need a family. We all have a desire for intimacy and a place to belong. Many of us believe that the only way our need for love and intimacy can be satisfied is through a spouse and, perhaps, children of our own someday. Yet, while we're busy looking for a spouse, we can miss God's provision for the family He wants us to experience today.

The early church described in the New Testament was a family of spiritual support and love. It was a group of believers, united by the Holy Spirit, who were learning to love God and each other. The New Testament makes it clear that these people were far from perfect. They were just as human as we are, and they had to work through the issues and challenges that go along with being human. The Apostle Paul's letters tell of disappointments, disagreements, and blatant sin that he had to confront in the early Christians. But he also tells of the sacrifice, love, and refreshment he received from this family of believers.

Back in the first and second centuries, the church was a “family” in every sense of the word. Today the body of believers is still a part of God's provision to meet our need for a place to belong.

Finding a Family

Even though God commands us to love everyone, He has only given us 24 hours in a day. That means we don't have time to develop intimate relationships with everyone in our lives. Even Jesus chose only twelve men to be his disciples.

So how do we choose the people with whom to become close friends? The Bible has some specific guidelines.

1. Proverbs 13:20 tells us, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Is there someone in your life that is having a negative influence on you,

making it difficult for you to obey what the Bible says, or keeping you from pursuing God with your whole heart? If so, who is that person? What effect is that person having on your life and your behavior?

2. What can you do to minimize the negative influences that person may have on your life? What steps can you take to do that today?
3. Of course, we need to spend time with non-Christians so that we can show them the love of Christ. But our closest friends, the ones we spend the most time with, are the people who will have the greatest influence in our lives.

Again, Proverbs 13:20 tells us, "He who walks with wise men will be wise." Also, in his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes, "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." (2:21-23)

How would you know if someone was pursuing God with a pure heart? What would they do? How would they behave? What would they talk about (or not talk about?)

4. Before you begin to size up those around you, let's first take a look inside. Are you pursuing God with a pure heart? If not, what are your stumbling blocks? What are you placing above your relationship with God?
5. What can you start to do today to make your relationship with God the most important thing in your life?
6. Now take a look at the people around you. Who do you know that you believe pursues God with a pure heart?

Some of you may not have been able to think of anyone you know who pursues God with a pure heart. If that is the case, pray and ask God to put someone with a pure heart toward Him in your life.

7. If someone came to mind, what will you do to pursue or deepen your relationship with them?
8. Remember that these are not perfect people. They are simply people who have a desire to obey God's Word and pursue intimacy with Him. No matter how you slice it, intimate relationships between two imperfect people have their difficult moments and involve a certain amount of pain. But as you spend time with people who are pursuing God, you can challenge each other in areas of obedience and grow in your ability to love God's way.

In Colossians 3:14, Paul tells us, "Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" How can you show love to the people in your lives during difficult times or when you are disappointed in them?

Chapter 4: Plan B

Read “Plan B”– Chapter 4 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Do you have a Plan A for your life that hasn't come to fruition? If so, what is it? How have you dealt with not seeing it unfold in the way you planned?
3. Have you ever gotten something that you wanted or reached a goal that you set for yourself and found the experience or end result to be disappointing or less than you expected? If so, please explain.
4. Oswald Chambers said, “Joy comes from seeing the complete fulfillment of the specific purpose for which I was created and born again, not from successfully doing something of my own choosing.” (My Utmost for His Highest Daily Devotional)

How do you think it would feel to reach the end of your life and know for sure that you had accomplished God's purpose for creating you?

How would it feel to know for sure that you are on the path – right now - to accomplishing God's purpose for your life?

5. Jeremiah 29:11 says “For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

Proverbs 16: 9 says “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”

These verses tell us that God has a plan for our lives and even though life may not be unfolding the way we had expected, we can rest assured that He is directing our steps to fulfill His purpose for creating us.

When you look back at your life, how has God directed your steps to bring you to this point?

How has He used the trials in your life to refine or change you?

How has He used people in your life to inspire you?

6. Even though God is directing our steps, He still gives us the free will to choose whether or not we will obey Him. The Bible tells us what happens when we don't obey God. Jeremiah 7:24 says, "Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward."

The Bible also tells us what happens when we obey what God tells us to do. Jeremiah 7:23 says, "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.'" God has promised that it will be well with us if we obey Him.

Has there been a time in your life when you disobeyed what the Bible (God's Word) said and ended up "going backward" or regretting what you had done? If so, what happened?

Has there been a time in your life when you obeyed God and, in turn, saw Him reward your obedience? If so, what happened?

7. Is there an area in your life in which you are not obeying what the Bible, God's Word, says to do? If so, what is it?
8. What can you do today or tomorrow to obey what God is asking you to do?
9. Do you sense God tugging you in a certain direction or showing you something He wants you to do? (For example, it might be related to your career, a relationship, an interest you have, etc.) He may be tugging on your heart through something you are reading, something you have heard, or through that still silent, voice we sense deep in our hearts. If God is tugging you to do something, what is it? (Remember that God never tells us to do anything that goes against what the Bible says.)
10. What can you do today or over the next few weeks to respond to God's call or take a step toward what He is leading you to do?

Chapter 5: The Setup

Read “The Setup”– Chapter 5 of Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Has God planted a vision for your life in your heart? If so, what is it?
3. Deep inside, do you wonder if this vision is really from God or if it is just your own desire?

1 Thessalonians 5:24 tells us, “Faithful is He who called you, and He also will bring it to pass.” In light of this verse, if the vision is really from God, of what can you be confident?

4. Sometimes, in the process of accomplishing His vision for our lives, God opens doors to accomplish the vision right away. But, usually, He takes us through a season of waiting. Abraham and Sara had to wait over 20 years before God miraculously fulfilled His promise to give them a son.

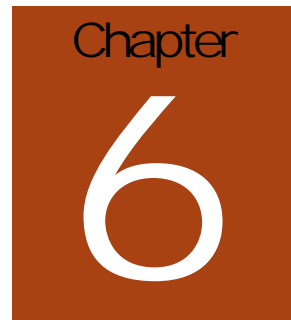
Is God opening doors to bring your vision to fruition, or are you in a season of waiting right now?

5. Isaiah 64:4 says, “For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.”

If you are in a season of waiting, according to this verse, what happens while you wait? What can you do to focus on the truth of this verse while you wait for God to open doors?

6. Has God opened a door or given you an opportunity (either large or small) that leads toward accomplishing the vision you believe He gave you? If so, explain.

7. If God has opened a door, have you walked through it? If you walked through it, what happened (or is happening)? If you have not walked through it, what is keeping you from walking through it?
8. If you have not yet walked through the door that God has opened, what can you do to take a step toward walking through it now?



Chapter 6: The Open Door

Read “The Open Door”– Chapter 6 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. God often calls us to do things that we cannot do on our own so that we will learn to rely on Him. In turn, we come to know Him in a more intimate way as we experience His strength. Is God asking you to do something that is too difficult for you to do on your own? If so, what is it? (This may be a command in the Bible or, perhaps, something you have sensed Him calling you to do.)
3. In Philippians 4:3 Paul tells us: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” If you were convinced that God would give you the strength to accomplish whatever He calls you to do, how would you respond to this command or calling? What would you do differently than you are doing now?
4. In *The Open Door* I tell the story of how I developed a fear of public speaking because of an experience I had as a child. What is your greatest fear? Can you identify something in the past that brought on your fear?
5. Jesus tells us that perfect love casts out fear. How do you think that God’s perfect love could cast that fear from your life?
6. Psalm 34:4 tells us, “I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.” What can you do to seek the Lord today? (For example, you might choose to spend extra time praying and reading the Bible. You might find a place to be alone where you can praise and worship God through music. You might decide to fast by skipping one or more meals and use that time to be alone with Him.)

What will you do to seek God in a special way today?

7. Take a moment to pray that God will show you His love in ways that will help you overcome the fears in your life. Then pray that He will give you the strength to accomplish whatever He is calling you to do.

Chapter 7: Bigger Fish to Fry

Read “Bigger Fish to Fry”– Chapter 7 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?

Ephesians 2:8 & 9 tell us that only faith in Jesus can get us into heaven. It says: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Yet, the Bible is also clear that once we are in heaven, we will be rewarded for what we did or didn’t do during our lives on earth. Matthew 6:19 & 20 tells us: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

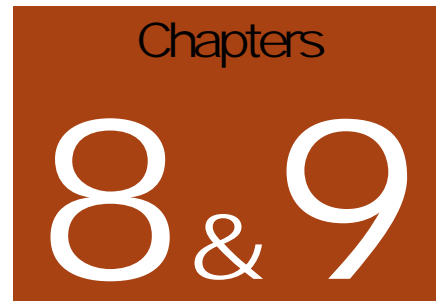
2. What did you spend most of your time focusing on this past week? What did you strive for? What did you worry about?
3. James 4:14 tells us, “You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.” Does this verse change your view of the things you listed above? If so, how?
4. In light of James 4:14, is there anything you wish you would have done differently this past week? If so, what?
5. In light of James 4:14, what do you want to do differently tomorrow? This coming week? This coming year?
6. Imagine that you died and stood before the Lord today. Would you meet a friend or would you meet a stranger? How would you feel about the way you invested your life on earth?

7. 2 Corinthians 4:18 tells us, “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The people we spend time with have a profound influence on the focus of our lives. Who in your life, encourages you invest your life in things of eternal value?

8. Who in your life distracts you from investing your life in things of eternal value? What can you do to minimize their influence on your life?
9. What do you influence others to focus on: things that will fade away or things that will last for eternity?
10. How can you encourage others to invest their lives in things of eternal value?
11. The books and entertainment that you read, view, or listen to influence your thoughts and, ultimately, the direction of your life. What are you reading, viewing, or listening to that keeps you focused on temporal things that will fade away? What can you do to refocus your thoughts on things of eternal value?

Please pause and pray that God will help you live your life with an eternal perspective. If you are not the kind of person that encourages others to invest their lives in things of eternal value, I encourage you to pray and ask God to make you that kind of person.



Chapters 8 & 9: The Fight – Round 1 and The Fight – The Final Round

Read “The Fight: Round 1”– Chapter 8 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

Also read “The Fight: The Final Round” – Chapter 9 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from these chapters?
2. God’s reason for telling us not to do something is simply to protect us from harm. I Thessalonians 4:3 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.” What physical, emotional, or mental harm can come from sexual immorality?
3. What examples can you cite from your own life or the lives of your friends?
4. One of the consequences of disobeying God’s commands is broken fellowship with God. Psalm 66:18 says, “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”

Have you ever been immersed in a sin and felt like God didn’t hear you?
What situation comes to mind? How did you feel?

5. There are many negative consequences that result from sexual immorality, yet many people who are aware of these consequences continue to engage in sexual immorality anyway. Why do you think they are willing to risk these consequences? What do you think they are searching for?
6. Is there a sin or temptation that you are struggling with? If so, what is it?

Ecclesiastes 4:9 & 10 tells us “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.”

Is there someone you trust that you can ask to help you keep from falling into sin? If so, who is it? When will you ask them to help you?

7. Have you ever struggled with guilt over something you have done in the past that you have already confessed and turned from? If so, how did that guilt affect the way you related to others?

Did that guilt affect other areas of your life? If so, how?

8. Did Satan use that guilt to keep you from serving God or glorifying Him in any way? If so, in what way?
9. Let's take a look at how King David from the Bible handled guilt. David wrote Psalm 51 after Nathan the prophet convicted him of his sin in committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband.

Read Psalm 51. What does David ask of God or say to Him in this Psalm? Does anything in this Psalm surprise you?

10. The first time I read Psalm 51 in context of when it was written, verses 12 and 13 surprised me. I thought it was awfully bold for a man who had just committed adultery and murder to tell God that he would teach transgressors God's ways and convert sinners to Him. Verse 14 also seemed a bit presumptuous. Here David asks God to deliver him from his guilt so that He could joyfully sing of God's righteousness. For some reason I felt like David should be miserable for a while to make up for what He had done.

Why do you think that many of us feel we need to be miserable after we sin, even if we have already turned from our sin and asked for forgiveness?

11. Sometimes we refuse to let go of our guilt because we feel that our misery will, in some way, make up for what we have done. Yet, Ephesians 2:8 & 9 tell us "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

In Psalm 103:12-14 God tells us, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust."

I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness." (Emphasis added.) (The Greek word for confess means to "acknowledge.")

When I re-read Psalm 51 with these verses in mind, I realized that all David was doing was believing God when God told him that he was forgiven. David believed God and responded in faith based on what God said - not on how David felt at the moment. No wonder God called David a man after His own

heart! David truly was a man of faith!

Is there something that you have confessed and turned from that you are having a hard time believing God has completely forgiven? If so, why do you think it is so hard for you to believe that God has completely forgiven you?

- 12.** When you can't forgive yourself for something that God has forgiven, what are you saying about your "standards" in comparison to God's "standards"?
- 13.** If you are struggling with guilt over something that you have already confessed and turned from, pray and ask God to help you believe the truth about what the Bible says about forgiveness.

In John 8:31 & 32 Jesus tells us, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Ask God to help you believe the truth in your heart so that you can be free to live a life that will bring the utmost glory to Him.

Chapter
10

Chapter 10: Paradise

Read “Paradise” - Chapter 10 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Do you blame God or are you angry with Him for something that happened or is happening to you? If so, what are you angry about?
3. Was (or is) your anger toward God affecting your life in any way? (For example, how does it affect your desire to spend time with God or your relationship with Him? Does it affect your relationship with anyone else around you? How does it affect the way you feel about yourself?)
4. Every emotion that is buried, is buried alive. The only way to work through emotions is to experience them. Ephesians 4: 26 & 27 says, “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” What do you think it means to be angry and not sin?
5. How can you express your anger to the Lord, yet not sin? Have you ever done that? If so, explain.
6. When God created man and women, He placed them in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:15 – 17 tells us, “Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.’” God could have very easily let Adam and Eve eat from every tree in the Garden. Why do you think He gave them one command that they could obey or disobey?
7. When God gave Adam and Eve the choice to choose between obeying Him and disobeying Him, He was giving them free will to love Him or not love Him. Imagine a situation in which someone was “programmed” to act in a loving way toward you. They did not have a choice to love you of their own free will. What would that relationship feel like to you? Would it really be satisfying?

8. Imagine that **you** were programmed to act in a loving way toward someone else. You were not given a choice to love of your own free will. How would that relationship feel for you? Would it be satisfying?
9. Why do you think that God was willing to risk allowing Adam and Eve to choose to disobey Him and, thus, risk allowing evil into the paradise He had created for mankind?
10. Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, God promised to send them a Savior. What does this say about God?
11. Isaiah 43:18-19 tells us, "Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."

Is there something in your past that you need to stop calling to mind? If so, what is it?

What new beginnings do you need to trust God for in that situation or in other areas of your life?

12. Joel 2:24 & 25 tells us, "And the threshing floors will be full of grain, and the vats will overflow with the new wine and oil. Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten."

Have there been years in your life that "the locust has eaten" – years in which you experienced a devastation or destruction - years that were "stolen" from you in some way? If so, explain.

How do you feel when you think about those years in light of Joel 2:24 & 25? (How does it feel when you know that God is able to make up for them?)

13. Psalm 27:13 tells us, "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Are you or have you been in despair? If so, explain.

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us: "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.'" God wants us to live in the peace and joy of knowing that He has good plans for our lives. Please take a moment and ask God to plant that hope for your future inside of you.



Chapter 11: The Masterpiece

Read “The Masterpiece” - Chapter 11 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. In chapter 11, “The Masterpiece”, Rebecca heard the speaker tell about the Savior God had sent - Jesus Christ. On page 165, she prayed a prayer to ask Him to come into her heart and take control of her life. In return, God gave her eternal life with Him, revealed Himself to her, and filled her with peace and joy. Have you ever asked Jesus into your heart to take control of your life? If you have not and would like to do that, you can do that now by sincerely praying the prayer below:

”Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open my heart and receive You as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Please take control of my life, and make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

1 John 5:11-13 says, “The witness is this that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.”

According to the verse above, if you have sincerely asked Jesus into your heart to take control of your life, what can you know that you have?

3. If you have prayed this prayer, tell a friend who studies the Bible or who you believe has also asked Jesus into his or her heart. If you have prayed this prayer, I would also like to know so that I can pray for you. I'll pray that God will continue to help you grow in your knowledge and intimacy with Him. I would also like to send you some material that can help you grow in your relationship with Christ. To let me know, please email me at patti@pattigordon.net.

4. Jesus doesn't always call someone to go to another country or even another state, but He does ask us to serve Him and tell others about Him so that they, too, can have eternal life and grow in the joy and peace that only He can bring. Have you ever sensed God calling you to serve Him in a particular way or place? If so, what is He asking you to do, or where is He asking you to go?

Remember, God's call for each of us is unique. He may be asking you to help with the children's Sunday School, sing in the choir, or be on a committee at church. He might be asking you to share your faith with someone you know or with fellow believers to encourage them in their walks with God. Perhaps He is calling you to serve Him in another city or country.

When you are trying to discern whether God is calling you to do something, remember that He will lead through heart, not the heart of another person on your behalf. Of course, God may use another person to confirm the call that you have already heard from Him.

God is strong enough to let you know His will and He wants you to know it even more than you want to know it. Listen for His still, silent voice. If you are not sure if an idea is from God, ask Him to clarify, then give Him time to make it clear. He is not a God of confusion who pushes and pulls you one way and then another. He gently tugs in one direction.

5. If He is calling you, how are you responding to His call?
6. If you are not responding in obedience, what step of faith can you take to get past any barriers and respond to His call?
7. The last thing that Jesus told His disciples was, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19 - 20) Many people refer to this as the great commission.

Take a moment and ask God how He would like you to be a part of His great commission. It is my prayer that you, too, would experience the incredible satisfaction of helping another believer grow in his or her faith or help someone find Jesus and, through Him, eternal life with God.

Chapter
12

Chapter 12: The Good Life

Read “The Good Life” - Chapter 12 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. When have you said no to God in the past? Did you experience any consequences of saying no? If so what were they?
3. Psalm 84:11 tells us, “For, the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Is it hard for you to believe that verse? Why or why not.
4. Was there something in your past that you didn't think was good, but ended up working out for good? If so, please explain.
5. Is there something in your life now that is hard to believe that God will use for good? If so, please explain?
6. Do you see any positive changes in your character because of the situation you identified in question 5? Do you see changes in anyone else's character because of it? If so, what are those changes?

(God is more interested in our character than in our comfort because He knows that character will bring us the greatest rewards in the end.)

7. Sometimes God uses trials in our lives to build endurance in us. James 1:4 tells us “And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” What do you think that verse means when it says endurance makes us perfect and complete lacking in nothing?

What are some things in your life that have built endurance in you?

8. Are there things in your life that you have had trouble viewing as “good”?

In light of Psalm 84:11 above, what good can you see coming from those things?

- 9.** What have you have wanted in your life that God has not given you?

In light of Psalm 84:11 above, what good has come out of waiting for those things?

- 10.** Take a moment to pray and ask God to help you see the trials in your life from His eternal perspective.

Chapter
13

Chapter 13: The Deal

Read “The Deal” - Chapters 13 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Have you ever sensed God asking you to do something or trust Him about something? If so, what was it? Describe your response. (If you are having trouble thinking of an example, think about your work, relationships, finances, family, health, or lifestyle disciplines.)

If you trusted God and obeyed Him in the past, what did He do?

3. Have you ever experienced God’s direct intervention in your life, or have you seen Him answer a specific prayer in a miraculous way? If so, how? How did that change your view of God?
4. Often God asks us to trust Him in small things before He asks us to trust Him in bigger things. What happens when we trust Him in the small things? What happens when we refuse to trust Him in those small things? (How does it affect our ability to trust Him and watch Him work in bigger things in our lives?)
5. If you fully surrendered your life to God, how do you think it would affect your life on earth? How would it affect your life for eternity?
6. If you did **not** fully surrender your life to God, how do you think it would affect your life on earth? How would it affect your life for eternity?
7. At the end of Chapter 13, I signed a contract to fully surrender my life to God. There is nothing magical about a physical contract, but for me, it was akin to driving a stake in the ground. I knew that, from that point on, my life was no longer my own.

After I signed that contract, I felt an incredible sense of peace and freedom. I had finally given God permission to use my life for whatever He deemed to be its highest and best use. The peace I felt came from knowing that God will use

my life to make the greatest impact for eternity. I was finally free from any question as to whether I would somehow miss the mark. I keep that contract in my bedroom as a constant reminder of the decision I have made.

What other benefits can come from fully surrendering your life to God?

8. Since that day, I have watched God work in my life in ways I would never have dreamed. It truly was the best deal that I have ever made. Is there anything keeping you from signing a similar contract? If so, what is it?

If you are thinking about signing a contract to fully surrender your life to God, I encourage you to first consider Deuteronomy 23:23. It says, "You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised." Our vows to the Lord must not be taken lightly. It is better not to vow to God at all than to vow and not keep your word.

When you write your contract, you can use the words I wrote or you can use your own words. But whatever words you choose, you will never regret fully surrendering your life to a sovereign God who loves you more than you can comprehend!



Chapter 14: Whole in One

Read “Whole in One” – Chapter 14 of *Press Play – Taking the Single Life Off Hold*.

1. What did you learn from this chapter?
2. Are there things about the way you look or the way God made you that you wish were different? If so, what are they?
3. How has this desire to be different affected your life through the years?
4. Imagine being able to completely love and accept yourself just the way God made you. How would life be different for you? How would your past have been different?
5. Psalm 139:13-14 tells us, “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.”

Even though we may read that verse and understand it in our heads, it isn’t quite as easy to understand it in our hearts – in a way that truly changes the way we look at ourselves and at others.

Sometimes God uses the words or actions of others to open our hearts to a truth. In Chapter 13, “The Deal,” He used Carolyn to open my heart to the truth of His constant companionship. I knew, in my head, that He was always there, but His constant presence didn’t become real to me until He used Carolyn’s faith to challenge me to trust Him. In turn I got to watch Him intervene in an intimate way in my life.

At other times, God may engineer circumstances or events in our lives to bring a truth home to our hearts. In Chapter 1, “The Promise,” He used Mark’s death to teach me that I could trust Him to heal my heart and give me true peace. In Chapter 14, “Whole in One,” He taught me how much I was loved and accepted by manifesting His love in a way that I can never fully explain or understand.

God has more ways to teach us than there are stars in the sky. He is the God of infinite creativity. Moreover, He understands us perfectly, and knows exactly what it will take to transform a truth from an intellectual belief to something that truly changes our lives.

What truth(s) would you like God to move from your head to your heart?

6. How do you think your life would be different if your heart could completely grasp the truth(s) you identified in question 5?
7. Romans 12:2 says: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Our part of the process of transformation is to renew our minds with the truth of the Bible - God's word. Its truth has been transforming lives for centuries.

What are some verses in the Bible that address the truth(s) that you identified in question 5? (If you do not know any verses that apply, ask a friend or go to Biblegateway.com or a similar website to search for verses using a key word.)

8. Romans 12:2 says we must renew our minds with the truth. A good way to do this is to memorize verses and meditate on them throughout the day. Which of the verses above do you think would be most helpful in renewing your mind in the area you have chosen?

I encourage you to:

- Write these verses on small cards that you can carry with you.
 - Memorize the verses.
 - Meditate on the verses throughout the day.
 - Pray and ask God to use the truth of those verses to transform your life.
 - Wait patiently.
 - Then last, but not least, watch Him change your heart and your life!
9. In Proverbs 8:17, God tells us, "I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me." Are you diligently seeking God? If so, how is He revealing Himself to you?
 10. If you want a more intimate relationship with God, what are some things you can do to seek Him in a more diligent way? How do you think your life will change when you have a more intimate relationship with Him?