GOD IS STILL FOR YOU

STUDY GUIDE

Based on the book by Bob Page

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction... 3

What to Expect from This Study... 3
How to Use This Guide... 4
A Word of Encouragement... 4

Suggested Reading Schedule... 6

Daily Reading Tips... 6
Two-Week Reading Plan... 7
Four-Week Reading Plan... 7
Six-Week Reading Plan... 7
Eight-Week Reading Plan... 7

Small Group Recommendations... 8

For the Participant... 8
For the Leader... 10

Letter from the Author... 12

Chapter Studies... 13

Chapter One... 13
Chapter Two... 19
Chapter Three... 25
Chapter Four... 32
Chapter Five... 38
Chapter Six... 44
Chapter Seven... 51
Chapter Eight... 57
Chapter Nine... 65
Chapter Ten... 73
Chapter Eleven... 78

Appendix A... 83

10 Reasons Why God Is Still for You

Appendix B... 84

Key Scripture References

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Your Journey Back to Hope

If you've picked up this study guide, chances are you're walking through one of life's dark valleys. Perhaps you've lost someone precious to you. Maybe you've been deeply disappointed with life or are facing what seems like an impossible situation. You might be questioning everything you once believed about God's goodness or the promise of his presence. Maybe you're wondering if God really cares about you.

You are not alone in these questions, nor are you alone on this journey.

What to Expect from This Study

This study guide is designed to accompany you as you work through *God Is Still for You*. This isn't a quick-fix guide or a collection of spiritual platitudes. Instead, you'll find:

Honest Engagement with Hard Questions: We won't skirt around the complex realities of pain, loss, and doubt. Instead, we'll face them head-on with both compassion and biblical truth. Helpful chapter summaries will highlight key teachings as we encounter truth from God's Word and seek to apply it to our lives.

Real Stories, Real Hope: Along with biblical truth, you'll also encounter real-life stories that will intersect with your own struggles and point you toward authentic hope. Questions are provided at the end of each chapter to help you go deeper in your personal reflection on the Bible verses and stories that impacted you.

Practical Application: At the end of each chapter, you'll find a recommended song from the *God Is Still for You* playlist* designed to provide a place to think deeply about the truth that God is still for you even in your present circumstances, to pray, and to listen for God's voice. Each song provides an opportunity for you to move from intellectual understanding to heart-level transformation. Writing space is provided for further reflection and response.

Small Group Discussions: In addition to reflection questions, additional questions are provided for group use. As you read the chapters and respond to the questions in your group, don't be surprised if you have an insight someone needs to hear. Maybe someone's words will be just the encouragement you need. A key message of *God Is Still for You* is that hope is a team sport. Use the questions to help build your team.

***The *God Is Still for You* playlist is available on Spotify**

Your Starting Point Matters

Whether you're starting this study from a place of fresh grief, longstanding doubt, or quiet desperation, God meets you exactly where you are. You don't need to have your faith figured out or your emotions under control. You don't need to pretend you're stronger than you are or more certain than you feel.

What you need is the courage to keep turning pages, to keep asking questions, and to remain open to the possibility that even in your darkest hour, hope is not only possible—it's promised.

How to Use This Guide

Each chapter of this study guide corresponds to a chapter in *God Is Still for You*. You'll find it most beneficial to:

1. **Read:** Review the corresponding book chapter first
2. **Reflect:** Consider the opening Bible verse and work through the reflection questions in this guide at your own pace
3. **Pray:** End of chapter prayers are provided to bring what you're learning before God for wisdom and guidance
4. **Listen:** Scan the provided QR code to listen to the recommended playlist
5. **Share:** Use the discussion questions to share with others when you feel ready

Remember, this is your journey. Move at whatever pace feels right for you. Some chapters may require more time for processing than others. Some questions may hit closer to home. That's not only okay—it's expected.

A Word of Encouragement

The very fact that you're here, willing to engage with complex questions about faith and hope, speaks to a courage that perhaps you don't even recognize in yourself. In a world that often tells us to move on quickly from pain or to suppress difficult emotions, you've chosen a different path—the path of honest wrestling with God.

This is the same path walked by several biblical figures who discovered that God is not threatened by our questions, offended by our doubts, or absent in our pain. He is present, He is good, and He is still for you—even when everything in your circumstances suggests otherwise.

As you begin this study, know that you're embarking on a journey that has the potential to transform not just your understanding of hope, but your entire

relationship with the God who never sleeps, never abandons, and never stops working for your ultimate good.

Your desert season may not be over, but you don't have to walk through it alone. In your desert, there’s an oasis where hope flows like water waiting to be rediscovered.

Welcome to the journey.

"The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."— Zephaniah 3:17

SUGGESTED READING SCHEDULE

Whether you are working through this study with a group or on your own, here are four suggested reading schedules to choose from. Choose a schedule that will allow you or your group to carefully consider and pray through each reading, not merely get through an assignment. Adjust the pace as needed based on your schedule and processing style. The goal is transformation, not just completion.

Choose a more intensive reading schedule if:

- Your group prefers a faster pace with more content each week
- Members are experienced in Bible study and comfortable with longer reading assignments
- You have time constraints due to seasonal schedules or the church calendar
- Your group enjoys covering multiple themes in each discussion session

Choose a more contemplative reading schedule if:

- Your group includes newer believers or those less familiar with Bible study
- Members prefer smaller reading assignments that allow for deeper reflection
- You want more time for relationship building and personal sharing
- Your group benefits from focusing on one central theme per week

Daily Reading Tips

- **Make Time:** Set aside 20-30 minutes for focused reading.
- **Choose a Consistent Time:** Read in the morning for inspiration or choose to read in the evening for reflection.
- **Make Notes:** Highlight or note passages that resonate with you. Write in the margins.
- **Pray:** Meditate on key themes before and after reading.
- **Don't rush:** It's better to read less with reflection than more without absorption.

2-week schedule

- **Week 1**
  - Days 1-2: Introduction + Chapter 1
  - Days 3-4: Chapters 2-3
  - Days 5-6: Chapters 4-5
  - Day 7: Chapter 6 + Reflection
- **Week 2**
  - Days 8-9: Chapters 7-8
  - Days 10-11: Chapters 9-10
  - Days 12-13: Chapter 11 + Conclusion
  - Day 14: Final reflection and application planning

4-week schedule

- **Week 1:** Introduction + Chapters 1-2
- **Week 2:** Chapters 3-5
- **Week 3:** Chapters 6-8
- **Week 4:** Chapters 9-11 + Conclusion

6-week schedule

- **Week 1:** Introduction – Chapter 1
- **Week 2:** Chapters 2-3
- **Week 3:** Chapters 4-5
- **Week 4:** Chapters 6-7
- **Week 5:** Chapters 8-9
- **Week 6:** Chapters 10-11 + Conclusion

8-week schedule

- **Week 1:** Group meet-and-greet, no reading
- **Week 2:** Chapters 1-2
- **Week 3:** Chapters 3-4
- **Week 4:** Chapters 5-6
- **Week 5:** Chapters 7-8
- **Week 6:** Chapters 9-10
- **Week 7:** Chapter 11 + Conclusion
- **Week 8:** Group conclusion, special guest, or shared service activity

SMALL GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS
for the participant

This guide provides a path for exploring the lessons and stories in the book, enabling you to reflect personally on them, relate them to your own experiences, and extract valuable life wisdom. This guide also provides recommended questions to help translate what you have learned in your personal reading time into a productive and helpful group discussion. If you are using this resource with a group, here are some valuable guidelines to help you get the most out of your group experience.

Come Prepared to Engage

Read the assigned chapter(s) thoroughly before your group meeting and spend time reflecting on the personal questions provided in your study guide. Bring your book, a notebook, a Bible, and a pen so you can jot down insights from others' sharing or questions that arise during the discussion. Consider marking meaningful passages or writing brief notes in the margins as you read. Being prepared shows respect for your group's time together and helps you contribute meaningfully to the conversation.

Practice Active and Compassionate Listening

When others are sharing, please give them your full attention by putting away phones and maintaining appropriate eye contact. Listen not just to respond or relate, but to understand what someone wants you to know about their life experience. Avoid interrupting or immediately jumping in with your own similar story when someone finishes speaking. Instead, let their words settle and consider asking a follow-up question that shows you heard them. Remember that some people process thoughts verbally, while others need time to formulate their responses; be comfortable with brief moments of silence.

Honor the Sacred Trust of Confidentiality

What is shared in your group stays in your group—this is non-negotiable for building trust and safety. Never discuss someone else's personal stories with family members, friends, or other church members, even with the best of intentions. If someone shares something that genuinely concerns you for their safety or wellbeing, speak privately with your group leader rather than gossiping with others. This confidentiality extends to prayer requests, family struggles, work challenges, or any personal information shared during your time together. Creating this safe space allows authentic relationships to develop and encourages genuine spiritual growth.

Share Authentically but Respect Time Boundaries

It's okay to be vulnerable. Be willing to share honestly about your own struggles, insights, and questions rather than giving pat answers. Be mindful, however, that your group likely has 6-12 other people who also want to participate in the conversation. Be careful not to dominate the discussion. If you realize you're doing much of the talking, pause and invite others to respond or share their thoughts. Group leaders will often give gentle time cues, so be responsive when they guide the conversation forward to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Embrace Different Perspectives and Life Stages

Your group will likely include people from various backgrounds, ages, and stages of spiritual maturity. Welcome the wisdom that comes from hearing different viewpoints and life experiences rather than expecting everyone to think or respond exactly as you do. Newer believers may ask simple questions that seem elementary to you, while others may share insights that challenge your current understanding. Both dynamics are valuable for group growth.

Support Your Group Leader

Remember that your group leader is a volunteer who has prepared to facilitate meaningful discussion, not necessarily to teach or have all the answers. Help them by staying on topic, following their conversational guides, and being responsive when they ask questions or try to move the discussion along. Thank your leader regularly and consider how you can support them, whether through prayer, encouragement, or occasionally helping with practical needs, such as bringing snacks or setting up the meeting space.

Participate Consistently and Communicate Well

Commit to attending regularly and arriving on time. If you must miss a session, let your leader know in advance and consider reading the material anyway so you can catch up when you rejoin the group. Come ready to participate rather than observe. Even if you're naturally quiet, challenge yourself to share at least one thought or question each meeting. If you're naturally talkative, practice stepping back to create space for others to share their thoughts. Remember that your group becomes stronger when everyone feels valued and heard.

SMALL GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS
for the leader

Establish Clear Expectations from the First Meeting
During your initial gathering, communicate the group's purpose, meeting schedule, and basic ground rules, including confidentiality, respectful listening, and shared participation. Explain that this is a discussion group rather than a lecture format, so everyone's insights and questions are valuable contributions. Set realistic expectations about preparation (reading the chapter beforehand) and participation (everyone should feel welcome to share, but no one will be forced to speak). Clarify practical details, such as start/end times, location consistency, childcare arrangements (if applicable), and how you'll handle missed sessions.

Master the Art of Strategic Follow-Up
As you are leading a discussion on the group questions at the end of each chapter, learn to follow up with gentle probes like "What was that experience like for you?" or "How did that change your perspective?" If the discussion stalls, try rephrasing the question or sharing a brief personal example to model vulnerability. Always have a backup question ready in case your planned discussion points don't resonate with your group that day.

Encourage Balanced Participation
Learn to recognize your group's personality types and adjust your approach accordingly. For naturally quiet members, make eye contact and use inclusive phrases, such as "I'd love to hear your thoughts on this if you'd like to share." For dominant talkers, politely redirect with phrases like "Thanks for that insight. Let's hear from some others who haven't spoken yet." Create natural pauses in conversation that allow introverts time to process while keeping the energy moving for extroverts. Remember that some people contribute through active listening and non-verbal encouragement, which is just as valuable as verbal participation.

Navigate Difficult Conversations and Rabbit Trails
When discussions veer into controversial territory, politics, or lengthy personal stories, gently redirect by acknowledging the comment and steering back to the study material: "That's an important concern. How does tonight's reading speak to situations like that?" If someone monopolizes time with crisis-sharing, offer to talk with them privately after the meeting rather than allowing it to hijack the group experience. When theological debates arise, remind the group that people can

disagree on secondary issues while still learning from the main themes. Have a few transition phrases ready, like "That gives us a lot to think about. Let's look at the next section..." or "I'm hearing some great insights. How does this connect to what the author says about...?"

Create a Welcoming Environment for All Spiritual Levels

Remember that your group may include new believers, longtime Christians, and people still exploring faith, so avoid assuming everyone shares the same theological vocabulary or biblical knowledge. When someone asks a fundamental question, thank them for asking and provide a simple explanation without making them feel embarrassed. Encourage questions by saying things like "Great question" or "I'm glad you brought that up." If you don't know an answer, admit it honestly and offer to research it for next time or ask if others in the group have insights to share. Model vulnerability by sharing your own questions, struggles, or times when you've learned something new, which permits others to be authentic rather than feeling pressure to have everything figured out.

Manage Time and Energy Effectively

Start and end on time to respect people's schedules and maintain trust with group members who have arranged childcare or other commitments around your meeting time. Plan your discussion flow with rough time estimates: opening prayer (2-3 minutes), check-in time (5-10 minutes), main discussion (30-40 minutes), and closing prayer (2-3 minutes) for a typical hour-long meeting. Watch for signs of group fatigue, such as decreased engagement, side conversations, or restlessness, and be willing to wrap up early rather than pushing through material for the sake of completion. Conclude each session with a brief preview of next week's reading to help participants mentally prepare for the upcoming discussion.

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Friend,

Thank you for reading *God Is Still for You*. Maybe you picked it up because you or someone you care about is going through a challenging season. As you read, I hope there are moments of clarity and encouragement when you feel like something was written just for you.

If you're reading this book with a group, you've made an excellent decision. I believe finding hope is a team sport! God can do amazing things for us in a group where the members support each other and search his Word for truth together.

What if you knew the desert you're in today is not your final destination? What if you could be sure there's an oasis ahead—a place where hope is always available? I believe that could transform the hurt and the disappointment you feel into purpose. Come explore ten reasons with me why I believe that's true. By the way, number ten is the game changer! It's my favorite!

With deep respect and abiding hope,

Chief of Chaplains, Marketplace Chaplains
Chaplain, Brigadier General, USAF (Retired)

CHAPTER ONE

The God Who Never Sleeps

I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.
Romans 8:38–39 MSG

You Are Not Alone

In this opening chapter, Bob shares one of the most defining experiences of his life—a near-fatal head-on collision that left him hospitalized in traction for two months. What began as a simple family evening out became a turning point that would teach him profound truths about God's care. Lying on hot asphalt after the crash, his right foot pointing in the wrong direction, it may have been easy to think he had been abandoned by God—alone, helpless, and without hope. But was that the truth?

REFLECT

When have you felt most alone in your struggles? Think about a time when circumstances made you feel abandoned or forgotten by God. Looking back, can you identify any ways God may have been present that you didn't recognize at the time? How might this awareness change how you view your current challenges?

God Is Near

Let’s explore Psalm 121 further. This Psalm is David's timeless song about God's constant watchfulness. When David wrote, "I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?" he was facing his own desperate circumstances. His answer anchors the entire chapter: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

Challenges will come, we will face difficult times, and it will be easy to question why bad things happen. God doesn't promise you'll never suffer pain, struggle through hard times, or experience loss. Even Jesus suffered, and ten of his disciples chose martyrdom rather than deny their faith. But nothing can separate us from God’s love. Not this disease. Not this divorce. Not this darkness. Not even this doubt. Absolutely nothing.

The promise isn't that we won't face hardship—it's that we won't face it alone.

Like the young boy who discovers his father had been standing guard watching over him throughout the night and like the runner’s dad who carried him across the finish line, our heavenly Father is watching over you.

REFLECT

What would change if you genuinely believed "Nothing can separate me from God's love"? Take time to assess honestly: Do you live as though you believe God's love for you is constant and unchanging? What specific fears, doubts, or circumstances challenge this belief? How might your daily choices, relationships, and responses to hardship change if you were convinced of God's unwavering love and presence?

God Provides

During Bob's hospitalization, God provided in remarkable ways. While in traction and unable to move from his hospital bed, Bob wondered how he would provide for his family. Despite a terrible real estate market that had even seasoned real estate agents struggling, two homes he had listed before the accident sold in two months. When his commission checks were personally delivered, he described them as "manna from heaven!"

This divine provision came at precisely the moment when Bob felt most helpless. He had no income, a family depending on him, and he faced the crushing prospect of having to return his GI Bill benefits since he wasn't able to attend seminary classes. Yet God met their needs in ways he never could have imagined.

God's provision often comes through seemingly impossible circumstances.

God's provision often comes through seemingly impossible circumstances—not despite them, but through them. There's nothing this world can throw at you that the maker of heaven and earth can't rescue you from, help you with, heal you of, and bring you through. God's provision isn't limited by market conditions, personal circumstances, or our ability to work. When we're flat on our backs, unable to help ourselves, we may discover that we're in the perfect position to see God's hand move on our behalf.

REFLECT

How has God provided "manna from heaven" in your life? Reflect on unexpected provisions, timely help, or surprising grace you've experienced during difficult seasons. How might remembering these instances of God's faithfulness strengthen your trust in his ongoing care, even when you can't see his hand at work?

Conclusion

The chapter's core message is simple but life-changing: Whatever you're going through, you don't have to go through it alone. Your heavenly Father is watching over you with continuous, unblinking care, even when your circumstances might tempt you to believe otherwise. He is not against you—**God is still for you because he is always watching over you.**

PRAY

Lord, despite what my circumstances may lead me to believe, despite the pain I feel right now, the truth is, you are for me. I know you see what I'm going through, and you care about me. Right now, I choose to trust you. Thank you that nothing in my past, present, or future can ever separate me from your love. I pray this in Jesus's name. Amen.

LISTEN

Take a few minutes now to listen to "Hold on to Me" by Lauren Daigle. Reflect on the song and how it may express what you want to say to God or how it relates to the chapter you have just read. For easy reference, you can find the song in a Spotify playlist accessible by scanning this QR code.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider your responses to the discussion questions on the next page. Or use these lines to take notes during your group discussion.

1. Describe a time you questioned your faith because of something that happened (or is happening) to you or someone you love.

2. David wrote, "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). Where do you need God's help now?

3. What would you say to encourage someone who feels they are alone going through a difficult situation?

CHAPTER TWO
Roadblocks and Detours

In all things, God works for the good of
those who love him, who have been
called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28

A Change of Plans

Life will give us unexpected detours. Not unlike the familiar frustration of inevitable construction delays and traffic, we will all face delays that detour us from our plans. In this chapter, Bob challenges the false notion that if we have a God-given dream or destination, he will clear all roadblocks from our path.

Do you have a plan for your life? A vision for how it should unfold? Bob was sure of his path: finish college, attend seminary, and become a missionary. His direction seemed clear and affirmed by everyone he consulted. It certainly didn't include being drafted into the military during the Vietnam War.

Faced with a lengthy detour from the path he thought God had for him, Bob learned that you never go through life exactly as planned. Maybe you can relate.

> **REFLECT**
> **What "roadblock" in your life currently feels like a detour from God's plan?** How might this apparent detour actually be preparation for something greater? Ask God to help you see this situation through the lens of faith rather than frustration or fear.

Go the Second Mile

Matthew 5:41 offers Jesus' radical instruction to carry a Roman soldier's gear not just the required one mile, but two miles. Bob decided to "go the second mile" on what he thought would be a six-year detour, though he couldn't see God's plan at the time. Trusting God's character, even when he couldn't comprehend God's ways, became a defining principle in his life.

What he had viewed as a detour was actually perfect preparation. His navigator experience provided him with the language and culture of the Air Force, while his wife, Ruth, an Air Force chaplain's daughter, was uniquely equipped for military spouse life. The detour wasn't a detour at all because it enabled him to serve military families with an authentic understanding and love. How might you look at detours differently after reading this story? How do detours create opportunities for God to direct us toward his purpose for us?

> **REFLECT**
> **Are you willing to "go the second mile" in your current situation?** What would it look like for you to embrace your current unwanted circumstances with a heart to serve and trust, rather than just endure? How might going "the extra mile" become preparation for the future God has planned for you or to make you a blessing to others?

Love Unfailing

The Hebrew concept of *chesed* describes God's unfailing love, mercy, and loving kindness that is lavished on us, not because we deserve it, but because of God's character. Bob explains that when we've experienced this kind of divine love, we

can trust God even when circumstances are confusing. When you don't understand God's ways, trust his heart.

Romans 8:28 emphasizes that we are not passive spectators in God's plan but "co-laborers with God." Through all of life's experiences—wonderful, terrible, or confusing—God works with us to transform us to become more like Jesus, to share his love with others, and ultimately to bring him glory.

When you don't understand God's ways, trust his heart.

REFLECT

When have you experienced God's *chesed* (unfailing love) in your past?

Reflect on specific times when God showed you mercy, provided for you unexpectedly, or demonstrated his love despite your circumstances. How can these memories anchor your trust when you don't understand his current ways?

Conclusion

Do you need encouragement right now to face your own roadblocks or overcome bitter feelings about crushed dreams? If this is you, Bob advises checking life's "rearview mirror" with faith rather than shame, fear, or anger. Like the prophet Jeremiah, who found hope by looking back and remembering God's faithfulness even in the midst of devastation and loss, when we look back in faith we will see God's protection, provision, and faithfulness. God may not reveal the entire plan upfront, perhaps showing only the next step. However, we can be sure of this: **God is still for you because he has been good to you in the past.**

PRAY

Lord, even though my circumstances right now may be painful and confusing, I remember how you've been good to me. I remember how you've helped me. I remember how you've treated me with grace and kindness at times when I least deserved it. Today I choose to trust you and follow your leading. I believe if I trust and obey, you will help me work together with you through these challenging times to accomplish something good in my life and in the lives of others. Through all these circumstances, my heart's desire is that you will receive glory and honor. I pray this in Jesus's name. Amen.

LISTEN

Listening to music can remind you of the truth that God is for you. Scan the QR code to find the full Spotify playlist and look for these songs:

- "Trust in You" by Lauren Daigle
- "Goodness of God" by CeCe Winans
- "My Redeemer Is Faithful and True" by Steven Curtis Chapman

As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the songs. How do they express what you're feeling? How do they relate to the chapter you have just read? Is there one that expresses what you want to say to God?

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider your responses to these discussion questions. Or use these lines to take notes during your group discussion.

1.Describe a roadblock that stands between you and something dear to you. What can you do to actively trust God in this situation?

2.How has a detour in your life affected your relationship with God?

3. David described a time when he felt like God had abandoned him (Psalm 13). Yet he remembered how God had shown him great kindness in times past and chose to continue trusting in God's unfailing love. Share a time or times in your past when God helped you, blessed you, forgave you, provided for you, or protected you. How was that like the unfailing love (*chesed*) of God that David remembered in his past?

4.How would you encourage someone who is discouraged or confused by an unexpected delay or detour in their life?

CHAPTER THREE
A Brass Coin and Solid-Gold Truth

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. . . .
What can mere mortals do to me?

David, after his enemy captured him
Psalm 56:3–4

A Divine Appointment

Being a military chaplain is deeply personal work. It is no small task to genuinely care for the men and women you serve alongside, to wear their uniform, to deploy with them, to walk with them through times of joy and grief. When Bob found himself seated next to an anxious young airman heading to Afghanistan for his first deployment, he recognized it as a divine appointment—an opportunity to care for someone God had placed in his path.

Just as God placed Bob in that particular airplane seat that day, God also prepares people to come alongside you to help when life is hard. And perhaps God is placing you in situations where you can help others as well.

REFLECT

Who has God placed next to you recently? Reflect on unexpected encounters or conversations you've had in recent weeks. Has someone's words or their listening ear provided you the encouragement you needed at that moment? Have there been opportunities for *you* to provide encouragement and listen to someone's concerns? Ask God to help you recognize these divine appointments and give you patience to listen and courage to share the words of encouragement they need to hear.

One-In-A-Million

Even in the darkest moments—when isolation feels heavy, loneliness creeps in, or depression clouds your thoughts—you are not truly alone. While isolation magnifies despair, community offers healing.

Bob vulnerably shares his own story of struggling with depression. Reaching out for help felt overwhelming, but it was when he called a retired chaplain friend that hope broke through the darkness. In fact, it was no coincidence. The exact person he reached out to was someone who had been through something very similar. He was able to recommend a next step. God had led Bob to a “one-in-a-million” person who could help.

While isolation magnifies despair, community offers healing.

REFLECT

Are you fighting any battles alone that God never intended you to face in isolation? Honestly assess areas where you may be struggling—depression, anxiety, relationship problems, financial stress, health concerns, or spiritual doubts. What pride, fear, or shame is keeping you from reaching out for help? Who in your life might be the "Chaplain Posey" God has prepared to understand your specific situation?

How has God used your past struggles to prepare you to help others?
Consider difficult seasons you've walked through and how those experiences have equipped you with empathy, wisdom, or practical knowledge. How might God want to use your story—including your failures and recoveries—to provide a listening ear to someone else who's struggling?

A Matter of Perspective

Help is always available, even when it's not immediately apparent. Like Mount Fuji hidden behind clouds and smog, you may not be able to see a path to the help you need. Help may feel distant or impossible in hard times—but that doesn't mean it's not there. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. It is the key to getting the help we need.

REFLECT

What "Mount Fuji" truths could you be missing because of the fog of your circumstances? Sometimes a storm clarifies what's important to us. It can help us see that God has been with us all along. He will direct us to the people he's prepared to help us.

Conclusion

God is still for you because he has prepared someone who can provide the encouragement and help you need. There is always someone who cares, whether it's a trusted friend, a loved one, a mentor, or a professional who is ready to listen. The help you need is closer than it may seem. You are worth fighting for! You don't have to carry this weight by yourself.

If you've thought about suicide, or you're worried about a friend or loved one, or you need some emotional support, there is a Lifeline network available 24/7 across the United States. Dial 988 and someone will listen to you without judgment. Your call is confidential and free. If you prefer to text rather than talk, you can also contact a trained crisis counselor by texting 'HOME' to 741741. This service is also free and available 24/7 in the United States.

PRAY

Father, there are times when I feel like nothing about my life is within my control. I confess I worry about what is ahead. Sometimes I question whether I'm equal to the task. I fret about the safety and well-being of the people I love. Lord, I know I have an alternative to fear. Today I choose to trust you with this situation. As I breathe in, please fill me with your peace. As I exhale, take away my anxious thoughts and calm my heart. Direct me to someone I can talk to without fear of judgment. I will listen for your voice in the encouraging words of those who care about me. Lord, please help me not to let pride or anger or fear keep me from getting the help I need.
In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.

LISTEN

Music has a way to refresh your heart and mind when you feel isolated and alone. Scan the QR code and find the song "I Need a Miracle" by Third Day. As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions. Or use the space below to jot notes during your group discussion.

1.Imagine that God has someone prepared to encourage and help you. How might you recognize them? What will you do now to connect with them?

2.Share a time when someone gave you the encouragement or help you needed. How did they encourage you? How did they help you?

3. Share a time when you were able to encourage someone because you had already experienced what they were going through. How did you encourage them? How did you help them?

4. After reading this chapter, is there someone you're concerned about? What is your prayer for them? How will you reach out to them today? What would you say to someone who is thinking of suicide?

5. If you're a company leader, how could chaplains make a difference for your employees and for your business?

CHAPTER FOUR

Night Vision Goggles

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.
Isaiah 43:2

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9

Your Darkest Hour

Sooner or later, we all find ourselves in a dark valley. It's a universal human experience. The circumstances of our valleys may be different from one another, but chances are, we all have been there. Walking through a dark valley can feel overwhelming—fear, sadness, and uncertainty may rise, making it hard to see any way forward.

Voices from the shadows may whisper that you are lost or forgotten. But the truth is you are not walking this path alone. In the darkness your faith that God is faithful and true can help you see his presence with you.

REFLECT
What dark valley are you walking through right now? David saw that God was with him in the dark valley and it gave him courage to keep walking forward trusting in God's goodness.

If you had night vision goggles for your spiritual life right now, what evidence of God's presence and work might you be able to see that you're currently missing? What would change about your perspective and response to your challenges if you could clearly see God with you in the darkness?

The Lord is MY Shepherd

Psalm 23 is one of the most-quoted verses of the Bible, though Psalm 22 could be seen as more relatable. In the 22nd Psalm, we hear a song of lament, but the following Psalm declares God's presence rather than questioning his apparent absence. If faced with a choice during a difficult time, which do you default to—a lament or a statement of hope and faith?

Don’t be concerned if you’re not proud of the way you answered that question. Lamenting and questioning God are natural responses. Bob acknowledges that it’s okay to tell God that we feel abandoned. It’s okay to ask God honest questions. Choosing hope is not always easy.

In this chapter, we read the inspiring story of how Chaplain Robert Preston Taylor chose to hold on to hope. His extraordinary story of faith chronicles surviving the Bataan Death March, being imprisoned in a POW camp, and returning home to discover his wife had remarried. Through it all, Chaplain Taylor chose to trust the truth of God’s Word over his circumstances.

Choosing hope is not always easy.

What makes both David’s words in Psalm 23 and Chaplain Taylor’s experience so powerful is not just that they acknowledged God as the Shepherd, but that they could boldly declare him as "my Shepherd." This personal relationship made all the difference in how David experienced the green pastures and dark valleys—and how Taylor survived the unthinkable.

REFLECT

Can you honestly say, "The Lord is MY Shepherd"? What would need to change in your relationship with God for you to move from acknowledging him as "the" Good Shepherd to claiming him as "my" Shepherd with personal confidence? What specific areas of your life have you not yet surrendered to his shepherding care?

Conclusion

Psalm 23 doesn't promise we'll never walk through dark valleys. In fact, it assumes we will. It does promise, however, that even in life's darkest hour, we're not alone.

What if your faith worked like night vision goggles, enabling you to see through your present darkness? What if you knew the Lord was with you with every step, ready to meet every need?

God is still for you because he is with you, even in your darkest hour.

PRAY

Lord, in my darkest hour, I am not alone. I know you are with me. I am holding on to the truth that you will not abandon me in my suffering. I choose to trust you in this darkness until you bring me into the light of freedom and joy again.
In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and find these songs on the playlist:

- "Psalm 23 (Surely Goodness, Surely Mercy)" by Shane & Shane
- "Still Waters (Psalm 23)" by Leanna Crawford

As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the questions on the next page. Or use the space below to jot notes during your group discussion.

1. Sheep depend on their shepherds to lead, provide, protect, and care for them. When has God been like a shepherd to you?

2. If your faith was working like night vision goggles right now, what truth would you be able to see? How would that change things in your life?

3. The truth of Psalm 23 helped Chaplain Taylor when he faced almost certain death. What Bible passage has helped you in a tough time?

4.What truth would you share with someone who feels like they're going through the darkest time of their life?

CHAPTER FIVE

All Us Sparrows

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her:
"You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now
seen the One who sees me."

Hagar, when she was pregnant and alone
Genesis 16:13

From Brokenness to Blessing

It was 1970. Crowds had packed into the stadium, ready to worship. On stage, Ethel Waters stood not just as an award-winning, pioneering entertainer but also as someone who saw a significant transformation in her own life. As we read her story, we wonder how she made it through. She didn't just survive a broken beginning; she turned her story into a blessing for others. Her life is an inspiring testament to a God who knew her individually, who cared for her individual needs, and never left her side. God's eyes were always on his sparrow.

> **REFLECT**
> **Like Ethel, what parts of your story might God use to help someone else going through a hard time?** What experiences in your background, failures, or painful moments have you seen as disqualifying you from receiving God's love or sharing his love with others? How might these very experiences position you to encourage others who feel broken and unseen?

Looking Beyond the Hills

Bob invites us to reexamine Psalm 121, interpreting it as both a declaration of faith and a song of deliverance for pilgrims on their way to worship in Jerusalem. He paints a vivid picture of ancient travelers carrying both physical provisions and unseen burdens—perhaps similar to the same emotional and spiritual weights you carry today.

In this Psalm, David refuses to run to the hills for refuge and instead lifts his eyes above the hills to the One who made them and him.

When you are seeking relief from the burdens you're carrying, where do you look for help? To the hills or beyond them? Culture tells us to rely on career success, relationships, substances, entertainment, or social media validation for our sense of worth. But only God can provide the refuge we seek. Where do you need to apply the words of Psalms 121:2: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth"?

Only God can provide the refuge we seek.

REFLECT

When you face overwhelming circumstances, what specific "hills" do you turn to first? How might you practice lifting your eyes beyond temporary refuges to seek help from your Maker instead?

Being Audacious

Thinking the Creator of the universe has the time or interest to focus his attention on one person out of the eight billion on this planet sounds far-fetched, no? In a word, it's audacious. And yet God himself, history, and Scripture all show evidence of this time and time again. God values the ordinary, the broken, the wounded, the weak, the wayward, the needy, the poor, the marginalized, and the outcast.

It's here that we meet Civilla Martin, the author of the beloved hymn "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," and learn about the person who inspired her song. Civilla's friend radiated joy despite twenty years of confinement, severe disability, and the challenges of living in a world that too often doesn't see people in her circumstances. She chose not to measure her worth according to culture's standards, but to rest in the assurance that her heavenly Father loved her and was watching over her. She realized her worth in a relationship with the One who made her and saw her as his treasure.

> **REFLECT**
> **Consider your response to feeling invisible or overlooked.** When you feel unseen or your words go unheeded, what conclusions do you draw about your worth or God's care for you? How does an audacious confidence in God's individualized care challenge or encourage you?

Reflect on how Civilla's friend radiated joy. Her superpower was her ability to trust God through her limited circumstances. What difficult circumstances are you facing that could become an opportunity to demonstrate this same kind of joy-filled faith?

Conclusion

It doesn't matter what your circumstances, your disability, your pain, or your past may say about your worth. It doesn't matter how far you've missed the mark of what or where you wanted to be on this earth. It doesn't matter what scars you carry. Here's the truth—**your heavenly Father sees you, and you are his treasure.**

PRAY

Father, I am not defined by my disabilities or my failures. While I may feel that I am invisible to others, I know you see me. The truth is, you designed me, and I am your treasure. Knowing you love me unconditionally, I choose to live a life overflowing with hope and joy. Lord, would you let a bit of the hope and joy you've given me spill over onto someone you bring across my path today? In Jesus's name. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and find "The God Who Sees," featuring Nicole C. Mullen. As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions. Or use the space below to jot notes during your group discussion.

1.Describe a time when something or someone made you feel unseen or unloved.

2.What helps you know God sees you and values you? That you are God's treasure?

3.What is the source of your self-worth?

4.What would you say or do to help someone who feels invisible or worthless?

CHAPTER SIX
Outliers and Outcasts

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:7–9

Jesus Chooses the Unlikely

They were two of the most unlikely disciples Jesus chose: Levi, the tax collector, and Simon the Zealot. Levi was an outlier who leveraged his skills to become a tax collector for the despised Herod Antipas. Simon the Zealot represented the opposite extreme—a passionate revolutionary who was on fire with hatred for Romans and anyone friendly with them.

These two men could not have been more different. Yet Jesus invited both. He loved both. He knew both needed a Savior. Both had missed the mark of what God required —to "act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

In truth, we all have fallen short, but God still chooses us. And the transformation that begins can only be explained with, “but God…”

> **REFLECT**
> **Where were you when Jesus called you to follow him?** How might Jesus’ calling you to follow him impact the priorities or passions that direct your life today?

Who in your life seems like an unlikely candidate for Jesus's invitation to follow him?

The Call to Community

Jesus intentionally builds diverse communities that challenge our comfort zones. Sometimes he invites someone on the other side of the political fence, someone with crazy ideas, or someone with a scandalous lifestyle. He invites people into the family who don't share the same views. He welcomes people onto his team who don't look like you. ALL are welcome. And welcome equally.

Ephesians 2:14-16 explains how "Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us." This could apply to any community, church, or nation that finds itself divided into hostile camps.

Hostility is something we know well. Today's culture—especially online—can feel particularly harsh, where criticism and judgment appear quickly. In that noise, it's easy to get swept up in comparing, condemning, or defending ourselves. Consider how following Jesus shapes our response to people who are different from us.

REFLECT

When Jesus brings people into your circle who are very different from you, how do you respond? How does our love for one another demonstrate we are followers of Jesus?

An Invitation for Everyone

In this chapter, Bob introduces us to Bill, who is described as likely the "last on the list" of the 5,000 people at the air force base who would be expected to attend chapel and announce a decision to follow Jesus. Yet Jesus had Bill at the top of his list.

Imagine what Bill felt in that chapel service. It was a pivotal moment in his life. Is there a time when you or someone near you experienced a life-changing moment? What do you think went through Markus's mind when he felt the nudge to kneel by Bill and pray for him? Why do you think Markus's prayer and his tears touched Bill so deeply?

Outwardly, Bill and Markus were divided by rank, religion, and race. One was an officer, and the other a sergeant. One was a deeply committed Christian, and the other was far from God. One was Black, and one was White. We cannot know how Markus and Bill saw each other or what was in their hearts before they walked into the chapel. But we know when they walked out of the room that night, they were brothers in Christ.

REFLECT

What were the steps in Bill's transformation? How did Markus's obedience to the Spirit's prompting play a part in the work God was doing in Bill? Has God ever prompted you to reach out to someone with compassion? What barriers sometimes keep us from reaching out to someone who may need encouragement or prayer?

There is Hope for Us, Too

What does Bill's story teach us about the grace of God? Just as Jesus walked past obvious choices to call unlikely disciples, he continues to extend invitations to those that others may overlook or write off. He doesn't just invite us to follow him. He invites us to follow him with others. If Jesus was able to call Levi and Simon to follow him and love each other as brothers, then there's hope for your family, your community, and our nation.

We are never beyond the grace of God.

REFLECT

Is God prompting you to reach out to someone? What's stopping you from reaching out to that person?

Conclusion

Jesus's invitation extends beyond personal salvation to create communities where former enemies become brothers, proving that no one—regardless of their past, politics, or present circumstances—is beyond the reach of God's transforming grace. Of this promise, we can be sure.

God is for you because Jesus invites you to follow him.

PRAY

Lord, sometimes I think of my own brokenness and wonder how you could love me or invite someone like me to follow you. Other times, in arrogant self-righteousness, I wonder how you love someone who doesn't think just like me. Yet I know, Lord, we all need your grace. I acknowledge I have sinned against you. Help me receive your grace with humble gratitude and offer it freely to others who have hurt or offended me. When I think about how you know my every word and deed and even my thoughts, I'm amazed you invited me to follow you and to love everyone you love.
I ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and look for “One Day” by Cochren & Co on the playlist. As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions. Or use the space below to jot notes during your group discussion.

1.What person, book, song, or circumstance is God using—or has he used— to invite you to follow Jesus?

2.How is God’s invitation to follow Jesus evidence that God is for you?

3.Is there a broken relationship God wants you to mend? What is a first step you could take toward reconciliation?

4.How would you help someone who is considering following Jesus but is put off by the Christians they know?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Hope Like Water

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:23–25

Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:12

The Power of Brotherhood in Battle

Powerful bonds are formed when people go through a battle together. Bob illustrates this with his experience flying KC-135 tankers during the Cold War. He reflects on how his crew built trust and bonded through countless hours of alert duty and training missions. They formed an unbreakable bond that has lasted over 40 years. Their recent reunion demonstrated that true camaraderie forged in challenging circumstances creates lasting relationships.

REFLECT
Who is someone in your life who has been "in the trenches" with you during difficult seasons? How have shared hardships or challenges strengthened your relationships with others?

Breaking the Code When Others Need Hope

King David, hiding in a cave while Philistines occupied his hometown of Bethlehem, made an unusual request: water from the well near Bethlehem's gate. This wasn't about physical thirst—it was a coded message expressing his desperate need for hope. The well's location near the heavily guarded gate made this request extremely dangerous. Still, David knew that if someone could accomplish this impossible task, it would demonstrate God's presence and power to his discouraged troops. His cryptic message revealed a leader running low on hope in what seemed like a losing battle.

Three of David's mighty warriors heard his unspoken plea and risked their lives to penetrate enemy lines and retrieve water from that specific well. Their success was nothing short of a miracle, accomplished through teamwork, courage, and divine intervention. When they returned with the water, David refused to drink it, instead pouring it out as an offering to God. He recognized that this water was evidence of God's favor and presence.

REFLECT

How has God used someone to bring you hope in difficult situations?

When have you been called to take a risk to encourage or help someone who was struggling?

Hope Changes Everything

The most powerful truth of this story is that David was still in the cave when he poured out the water in worship. His circumstances hadn't changed, but his hope had been restored. And that made all the difference. He knew he wasn't in the battle alone. Bob emphasizes that. When our hope is restored through the sacrificial service of others, we're also reminded that we're not alone in our battles, that God sees us, and that he is with us.

Sometimes God doesn't change our situation but changes the problem within us.

REFLECT

Can you think of a time when your circumstances remained the same, but your perspective changed, and your hope was restored?

Conclusion

This chapter powerfully illustrates that God often restores our hope through the sacrificial service of others who are willing to risk everything to meet our deepest needs. Even when our circumstances remain unchanged, restored hope transforms our hearts and moves us to worship, reminding us that we are never alone in our battles.

God is for you because he restores your hope.

PRAY

Lord, right now I don't know how you're going to win this battle I'm in, but I'm trusting you. I'm grateful for my family, for my church, and for the friends who care about me. Through their kindness and sacrifices, Lord, I can see that you are with me. And because you are with me, I won't give up, and I won't let fear rule over me even when I'm walking through a valley of dark shadows. I'm ready to take the next step with your help. Thank you for opening my eyes to see the truth that you are with me in this battle. Thank you for restoring my hope. In Jesus's name. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and look for these songs in the playlist:

- "Stay Strong" by Danny Gokey
- "There's Nothing That Our God Can't Do" by Passion, Kristian Stanfill

As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on these songs and how they relate to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions. Jot your answers you prepare in the space provided or use this space to take notes as you learn from other people in your group.

1.Share a time when your family, church, or group of friends was there to support you when you were going through something hard. Whatever they did for you, how did it help you go on even if it didn't change your circumstances?

2.Who has sacrificed something to help you? Describe the circumstances and how their help changed you.

3.How have you expressed gratitude for the sacrifices others have made for you?

4.Is there someone you know who would be encouraged with a small gift, a meal, a card, or some other expression of kindness, even if it may not change their circumstance? What steps can you take in the next day or two to reach out to them?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Jesus, Job, and Bubba

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

The Wilderness of Suffering

When we think of a wilderness today, we may picture our happy place far from the stress of our workday world. But in Biblical times, the wilderness was considered a place of hardship and testing. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness where he faced three key temptations: turning stones to bread, throwing himself from a high place, and accepting an earthly kingdom in exchange for worship. Jesus overcame the lies of the deceiver by relying on the truth of Scripture. Bob shows that even though Jesus was God's Son, "he learned obedience through the things he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). This wilderness experience equipped Jesus to understand our human struggles and serve as our perfect mediator.

REFLECT
How has memorizing Scripture or spiritual truths helped you resist temptation during difficult times?

In what ways have your own wilderness experiences better equipped you to understand and help others?

Repurposing Pain

The chapter explores how God redeems our suffering to prepare us to help someone else. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that God "comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction" (1:3-4). To illustrate that, Bob shares the story of a friend who called him with a problem. Because Bob had been through something similar in his own career, he was able to help his friend. In another illustration, he shares the story of the woman who leads a ministry for children, teens, and adults with special needs. You can imagine how valuable a resource people find in Wendi Akers, who raised a daughter with autism. She has been the answer to the prayers of many parents.

Going through the hard stuff in life not only equips us to help others, but it also helps us grow in other ways. Paul made it clear that it was in the times of great stress that he learned to draw strength from God and lean on him instead of depending on his own strength. We discover that the hard times actually produce perseverance, character, and ultimately hope.

REFLECT
How has God used a challenging experience in your life to equip you to help others going through similar struggles?

Trusting Without Understanding

Job lost his wealth, health, and family, yet never let go of his faith in God, even though he didn't understand why these tragedies happened. Job's story reveals that grief and suffering aren't always caused by something we've done wrong, as Job's friends assumed. Sometimes we are called to trust God through our suffering without an answer to our question of why.

Following Jesus doesn't exempt us from trouble but assures us that God doesn't abandon us in our suffering.

Job's declaration, "I know that my redeemer lives," demonstrates hope that transcends circumstances. Following Jesus doesn't exempt us from trouble but assures us that God doesn't abandon us in our suffering.

REFLECT
How do you respond when you or others experience suffering that seems to have no clear explanation or purpose? What helps you maintain faith and hope when you can't understand why difficult things are happening?

The Prodigal's Return

Using the parable of the prodigal son (who we meet as "Bubba"), the chapter illustrates how our choices can lead us into a wilderness of consequences. The younger son demanded his inheritance early, left home, and squandered everything until he found himself hungry, broken, and alone. Meanwhile, his father waited faithfully, watching daily for his son's return. When the son finally came home, the father didn't wait—he ran to embrace his dirty, smelly son and threw a celebration. This story reveals God's true character: not as a harsh judge, but as a loving Father who runs toward us with grace and forgiveness. Regardless of how far we've wandered, we can still come home.

REFLECT

How does the image of God running to welcome a wayward son who had wasted his inheritance challenge your understanding of God?

There is seldom an easy answer to the question of why God allows suffering and loss. What do the experiences of Jesus, Job, and the prodigal son teach us about this difficult issue?

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that God doesn't waste our pain but transforms it into purpose, using our wilderness experiences to develop our character, deepen our dependence on him, and equip us to minister to others. Whether we're in the wilderness due to testing, circumstances beyond our control, or our own poor choices, God remains faithful and works even our suffering for good.

God is for you because God doesn't waste your pain but uses it to accomplish good.

PRAY

Father, I know we live in a broken world where Jesus said there is trouble. Please use these difficulties to teach me to depend on you and help me grow in ways I'd never be able to otherwise. Lord, repurpose my pain to equip me to help someone else. When my choices have taken me far from you and I'm suffering the consequences, help me to turn my back on my old, self-directed ways and return to you. Thank you for the promise that if I confess my sins, you are faithful and just to forgive and cleanse me, and welcome me home. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and look for the song "Run to the Father" by Matt Maher. As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions. Use the space provided to prepare your thoughts before your group session, or reserve it as a place to take notes during your discussion.

1.Jesus, Job, and Bubba each spent time in a different wilderness. When has life been like a wilderness for you? Where is the wilderness for you now?

2.What lessons did you learn (or are you learning) in your wilderness?

3.Why is it such a struggle when bad, unfair, or senseless things happen to us or to people we care about?

4.How would you help someone dealing with the consequences of bad choices?

5.How would you help someone who is struggling to understand why God has allowed something difficult or painful in their life?

CHAPTER NINE
Your New Best Friend

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.
John 14:16–17

I have called you friends.
John 15:15

Getting Angry with God

Can you relate to feeling emotions and frustration when you believe you are doing everything you can and working hard for a purpose, yet still face extreme hardship? Anger is a universal human experience. And God is very familiar with it.

We might expect Peggoty Stovall to get angry with God during her many years of health struggles. In her story, however, we see something else. Her devastating MS diagnosis certainly had her questioning God's plan for her life. Perhaps you can relate to her words: “God, I’m doing the best I can to serve you and do what you called me to do… How do you expect me to do these things and care for my family while MS is robbing me of my vision and strength?”

Peggoty didn’t hold back. And God wasn’t put off by her questions, showing her that her struggle with blindness may equip her even more than she could imagine.

The health struggles continued through multiple surgeries and the discovery of tumors and aneurysms. Just as Peggoty reached a point of complete exhaustion, her lifetime of service bore fruit. Friends, colleagues, and believers worldwide stood together to intercede for her during a crucial procedure, demonstrating the love of a community that stood strong when she was at her weakest point.

REFLECT
How have you experienced God's presence during seasons of physical or emotional exhaustion?

When have you felt supported by the prayers of others during difficult times, and how did that impact your faith?

Another Advocate

In the final days of his ministry on earth, Jesus promised his disciples another advocate. Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit as their new best friend, using a name that means Advocate, Helper, or Comforter.

How did you respond to Bob's explanation of comforter? You might see that word and think about someone who gives comfort, like a grandfather wrapping his grandson in a big bear hug. But "com-fort-er" actually means one who fortifies or strengthens from within, not merely someone who offers consolation.

REFLECT

How do you typically think of the Holy Spirit: as a distant force or as a personal friend and advocate? In what areas of your life do you need the Holy Spirit's strengthening and guidance right now?

Four Beautiful Benefits of the Holy Spirit

The chapter outlines four key ways the Holy Spirit helps believers:

- First, he lives within us constantly, providing 24/7 guidance and power from within, rather than relying on external influence.
- Second, he reveals the truth about ourselves and Jesus, convicting us of our need for a Savior while pointing us to righteousness received through faith, not achieved through works.
- Third, he confirms our identity as God's beloved children, allowing us to cry "Abba, Father" with confidence.
- Fourth, he intercedes for us in prayer when we don't know what to ask for, translating our wordless groans into prayers that align with God's will. Imagine the Holy Spirit bringing the same power that raised Jesus from the dead into our circumstances to meet our daily needs.

REFLECT
Which of these four benefits do you most need to experience more fully in your relationship with God?

Free for the Asking

God delights in giving the Holy Spirit to those who ask. He loves to hear our prayers and eagerly gives good gifts. The Holy Spirit is freely given to every person who opens their heart to Christ. He immediately seals and secures believers, posting a sign that says "This one belongs to Jesus!" It is through the Holy Spirit's work that we are transformed to be more like Jesus from the inside out. The Spirit serves as our guard, guide, and guarantee.

The Spirit serves as our guard, guide, and guarantee.

REFLECT
Are there areas where you've been reluctant to ask God for help, thinking you might be bothering him?

How have you seen the Holy Spirit's transforming work in your life, making you more like Jesus?

Conclusion

This chapter powerfully illustrates that the Holy Spirit is God's personal gift to every believer, serving as our constant companion, advocate, and source of strength through life's most significant challenges. Through Peggoty's story and biblical teaching, we see that the Holy Spirit doesn't just comfort us in difficulties but fortifies us from within, providing divine power and guidance that surpasses even Jesus's physical presence with his disciples.

You can be sure God is for you because God gives you the Holy Spirit to guide you to the truth and help you pray.

PRAY

Lord, thank you for calling me from my proud independence to recognize my need for you. Thank you for not leaving me alone to fight these battles on my own. Holy Spirit, your presence in my life, encouraging me and giving me strength to take the next step, is a powerful reminder that even in this difficult time, you are with me and you are for me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and look for the song "Who You Say I Am" by Hillsong Worship. As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to consider how you might share your responses to the following questions. Prepare for your group time in the designated space or take notes as you learn from what other group members share.

1.If you could travel in time and spend a day with Jesus during his earthly ministry, what day would you choose?

2.Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be another advocate to help you and be with you. How has the Holy Spirit helped you?

3.What is something the Holy Spirit has shown you about yourself?

4.What is something the Holy Spirit has shown you about Jesus?

5.Why do we need someone like the Holy Spirit to be with us and in us continuously?

CHAPTER TEN
This Changes Everything

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?
Romans 8:31–32

Two Sisters, Different Responses

The chapter opens with Martha and Mary, sisters with very different personalities. We see Martha as the take-charge firstborn who complained when Mary left kitchen duties to sit at Jesus's feet. We also see Mary, who may have lived a sinful life but experienced dramatic transformation through Jesus's grace. When their brother Lazarus fell deathly ill, the sisters sent word to Jesus, expecting him to come immediately. Jesus delayed his arrival, however, and Lazarus died. For four days, Martha sat Shiva, wondering why Jesus did not immediately come to save her brother. Her grief was complicated by anger and a sense that this death was preventable.

> **REFLECT**
> **How do you respond when God doesn't answer your prayers the way or when you expect Him to?** In what areas of your life do you struggle with the need to control outcomes?

God Understands Our Pain

When Jesus finally arrived at Martha's home, both sisters confronted him with identical words: "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." Rather than offering explanations or justifications, Jesus responded with profound empathy. John records the shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept." These tears weren't just superficial sympathy—they revealed the heart of God entering into human suffering.

God is neither an angry tyrant nor a distant, impersonal force. Instead, he is a God who steps into our hurt and weeps with us. This tender moment prepared everyone for the stunning declaration Jesus was about to make at Lazarus's tomb.

God steps into our hurt and weeps with us.

REFLECT

How does knowing that Jesus weeps with you in your pain change your understanding of God's character?

Jesus's Ultimate Claim

At Lazarus's tomb, Jesus made one of his most audacious claims: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." When he called Lazarus to come out of the tomb after four days, the dead man walked out alive, proving Jesus's power over death itself. This miracle attracted many followers but also set in motion events that would lead to Jesus's own crucifixion just five days after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The chapter concludes with the story of Tom, a faithful church servant who died of pancreatic cancer despite earnest prayers for healing. Like Martha and Mary, his wife Dina prayed desperately for Jesus to heal her husband. When Tom died, his family grieved deeply but were not without hope.

Jesus told his disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled," promising to prepare a place for them in his Father's house. The resurrection of Jesus provides the ultimate evidence that God is for us, having sent his Son to live sinlessly, die vicariously, and rise victoriously.

> **REFLECT**
> **What does it mean to you that death has been "swallowed up in victory" through Christ's resurrection?**

Conclusion

This chapter helps us to see that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the ultimate proof that God is for us, transforming both our understanding of death and our hope for eternity. Through Martha and Mary's story, Tom's example, and the eyewitness accounts of Jesus's resurrection, we see that while death brings real grief, it cannot separate believers from God's love or destroy the hope of eternal life with him.

In life and in death, you can be sure God is for you because God sent his Son so you can live forgiven, free, and forever.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, I believe you died on the cross for my sins. I believe you were buried and rose again on the third day. Your resurrection from the dead is all the proof I need that you are who you say you are and that your promises are true. I am trusting in you, Lord Jesus. I believe your promise that death will not be the end of my story. When my journey here is complete, take me to live forever in the place you have prepared for me. In your name I pray. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and look for the song "Our God" by Chris Tomlin. As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on the song and how it relates to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions:

1.What evidence do we have for the resurrection of Jesus?

2.Jesus made a promise that if we believe in him, we will live even though we die. If it's true that he rose from the dead, what does that tell us about the claims and promises he made?

3.If you haven't done so already, is there any reason why you can't put your trust in Jesus today? Will you take a moment and make the words of the prayer at the end of this chapter your own prayer to God? If you did that, take a moment to write today's date and sign your name on the lines below as a reminder of the decision you made today. Then I encourage you to tell someone about your decision to trust Jesus.

Today, I decide to trust in Jesus

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Your Best Life

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.
1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
Philippians 2:3–4 ESV

Mission on a Mountain

In the final chapter of the book, Bob describes visiting Joint Task Force-Bravo in Honduras. During this visit, he participated in a challenging hike up a steep mountain, carrying 40 pounds of food supplies to distribute to needy villagers. The grueling climb became a powerful metaphor for life's journey, complete with struggles, mutual support, and unexpected grace. Life's most meaningful moments often involve sacrificial service to others, even when it requires personal cost and effort.

> **REFLECT**
> **When have you experienced the joy that comes from serving others, even when it required significant effort or sacrifice on your part?** How might God be calling you to step outside your comfort zone to meet someone else's needs in your current circumstances?

Life is Best When You Live it FOR Others

Drawing from the mountain experience and biblical wisdom, Bob teaches that true happiness comes not from pursuing it for ourselves, but from bringing joy to others. He uses the analogy of the Sea of Galilee (which receives and gives water) versus the Dead Sea (which only receives water and remains lifeless) to illustrate that we flourish when God's blessings flow through us to others rather than stopping with us. The chapter emphasizes starting with those closest to us—family, neighbors, and community and expanding our service through our church or a charitable organization.

True happiness comes not from pursuing it for ourselves, but from bringing joy to others.

REFLECT

In what specific ways can you bring joy to the people you are doing life with this week?

Life is Best When You Live it WITH Others

Just like military families become extended families wherever they are stationed, life's journey is meant to be shared. Bob's in-laws left for an assignment in Turkey with great reluctance, but it became their most treasured military experience, thanks to the deep friendships they formed.

Joy is doubled when shared. Community provides essential support during life's inevitable challenges. Whether celebrating milestones or weathering storms, we need each other. God delights in putting together the teams we need to live and love well.

REFLECT

Who are the people in your life who have become like family, and how can you invest more intentionally in those relationships? In difficult seasons, how has having these people walking alongside you made a difference in your ability to persevere?

An Attitude of Gratitude

Our attitude can determine whether we experience life as a gift or a burden. In this final chapter, Bob compares two passengers on a long flight. One passenger blessed his meal, thanked the flight attendant, and then quietly read from his worn Bible. The other just complained. Side-by-side, they could have had similar experiences on that flight, but each man's attitude changed the flight not only for himself but for the others around him.

Gratitude transforms our entire life experience. It isn't just about feeling thankful, but about actively choosing to see God's goodness in our daily circumstances. Grateful people not only live better and longer lives, but they also make life better for everyone around them through their positive perspective and gracious interactions.

REFLECT

What specific things in your life right now can you choose to view with gratitude instead of complaint?

Conclusion

True fulfillment in this life comes not from self-focused seeking after happiness but from servant-hearted love that flows from receiving God's gift of grace. Like those airmen on the mountain, we can find joy even in the midst of sacrifice.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the gift of Your Son Jesus, who showed us what true greatness looks like. Help us to live lives that flow with Your grace, not just receiving Your blessings, but allowing them to flow through us to bring hope and joy to others. When life's mountain climbs feel steep and rugged, remind us that we don't walk alone, and give us eyes to see the unexpected moments of grace You place along our path. May our lives be marked by service, strengthened by community, and filled with gratitude, so that others might see Your love through our good deeds. Amen.

LISTEN

Scan the QR code and look for these songs on the playlist:

- “Grateful” by Elevation Worship
- “Be Alright” by Evan Craft, Danny Gokey, and Redimi2

As you listen, take a few minutes to reflect on these songs and how they relate to the chapter you have just read.

SHARE

If you are studying with a group, prepare for your group discussion by taking some time to thoughtfully consider how you might share your responses to the following questions:

1.Share about a time when you experienced or witnessed an unexpected moment of grace or joy during a difficult season. How did it change the experience?

2.What are some practical ways we can choose gratitude over complaint in our daily circumstances? How have you seen gratitude (or lack thereof) affect the atmosphere of your family, workplace, or community?

APPENDIX A
10 Reasons You Can Be Sure God Is Still for You

1.God is always watching over you.

2.God has been good to you in the past.

3.God has prepared someone who can provide the encouragement and help you need.

4.God is with you in your darkest hour.

5.Your heavenly Father sees you, and you are his treasure.

6.Jesus invites you to follow him.

7.God restores your hope.

8.God doesn't waste your pain but uses it to accomplish good.

9.God gives you the Holy Spirit to guide you to the truth and help you pray.

10. God sent his Son so you can live forgiven, free, and forever.

APPENDIX B
Key Scripture Passages

Bob has shared several helpful passages from Scripture throughout the book. Here is a list of some of the key verses you can refer to for reference, memorization, or reflection. Keep the study guide handy to read over these verses or cut along the dotted lines to carry the verses with you throughout your day. Put them on your fridge, tape them on your bathroom mirror, or tuck them in your Bible. Let them be a visible reminder that God is still for you.

I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—
nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic,
today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or
unthinkable—absolutely nothing can
get between us and God's love because of the
way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.
Romans 8:38–39 MSG

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:2

In all things God works for the good of
those who love him, who have been
called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.
Proverbs 3:5–6

But I trust in your unfailing love [chesed];
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me.
Psalm 13:5

The faithful love of the Lord never ends!
His mercies never cease.
Great is his faithfulness;
his mercies begin afresh each morning.
Lamentations 3:20–23 NLT

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.
Isaiah 43:2

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Psalm 23:1

Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.
Isaiah 1:17

What marvelous 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 3:1 MSG

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son,
purifies us from all sin.
1 John 1:7

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
Hebrews 10:23

Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:12

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

I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!
Job 19:25–27

I will ask the Father, and he will give you
another advocate to help you and be with you
forever—the Spirit of truth.
John 14:16–17

I have called you friends.
John 15:15

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
Isaiah 61:1–2

What, then, shall we say in response to these
things? If God is for us, who can be against
us? He who did not spare his own Son, but
gave him up for us all—how will
he not also, along with him, graciously give us
all things?
Romans 8:31–32

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can
help each other.
1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,
but in humility count others more significant
than yourselves. Let each of you look not only
to his own interests, but
also to the interests of others.
Philippians 2:3–4 ESV

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Bob Page

Bob Page is the chief of chaplains for Marketplace Chaplains—the oldest and largest provider of workplace chaplain care in the world, with twenty-two hundred chaplains serving 1.5 million employees and family members at six thousand locations in all fifty states, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

After beginning his Air Force career as a navigator on a KC-135A aircraft refueling other aircraft in flight, Bob then served twenty-six years as an Air Force chaplain, including eight months of deployment to Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Bob's civilian ministry includes pastorates in Arkansas, North Carolina, and Texas.

In 2012, while serving as a colonel in the Air Force, the United States Senate confirmed his promotion to brigadier general as the twenty-fourth Air Force deputy chief of chaplains. After serving at the Pentagon in that role for three years, Bob and his wife, Ruth, retired to Texas.

He was inducted into the Louisiana State University Alumni Hall of Distinction in 2014 and LSU's Hall of Honor for Distinguished Military Leadership in 2015.

When Hurricane Harvey devastated the Houston area with more than fifty inches of rain in 2017, River Pointe Church asked Bob to join their staff and lead their countywide effort to disburse a million-dollar relief fund and mobilize thousands of volunteers to help their neighbors recover from the historic flood. Then, as the church's Missions and Care pastor for the next five years, he led its eight thousand members to love God and love people locally and globally.

He and Ruth have two married daughters and five grandchildren, who amaze them daily.