The Unseen Way

A Book Study of Unseen: The Gift of Being Hidden in a World that Loves to be Noticed

By Amy Wicks

(with an introduction and framework by Sara Hagerty)
This is not your typical book club.

I’ll just say it now and alleviate any awkwardness. Here it is again: you haven’t signed up for an ordinary book club.

Here’s why:
To talk about our desire to be seen, that desire we mostly bury yet the one to which we daily respond, takes ordinary “cocktail party” conversations to an entirely different place. Even as I’ve merely shared the full book title with people in the months leading up to its release, the facial expressions and comments are often the same: Yes, yes!

We all feel it, this desire to be seen and known and celebrated.

But…what do we do with this desire in a culture that affords insta-opportunity to get applause, response, and that momentary thrill of a look?

This book reaches into the earth of our souls to uncover what we often don’t naturally discuss. It invites us to consider what we do with that craving to be seen and how we grow in Him, right there.

You might need to move closer to those alongside you and whisper as you thumb over these pages.

It’s what we all want, isn’t it? Reaching into the life of another—moving beyond the surface—and letting ourselves be a little more bare as we do.

Here’s my recommendation: arm yourself with good snacks and warm drinks, and make sure to fill the space around this book club with deep belly laughing. Hard laughter, real tears, and hunger for God make for the best friendships.

The pages of this book will invite you into all three, and I hope the guide itself will invite others to hold your hand—and your own story—as you do so.

Here are a few practical things to note as you read alongside others:

The book can be unfolded one chapter per week or several chapters per monthly meeting. We didn’t distinguish here, as we wanted it to fit you—your group, your timing, your mold.

My dear friend Amy Wicks (who also played a key role in naming this book Unseen) has been grappling with this message long before I wrote these pages and thus we commissioned her to write the study. I couldn’t be more thrilled to have a close friend write a study for my book that will likely draw close friends into closer conversation about their lives and about Him.
Amy created a section that will enable you to prepare before you meet as a group (because don’t we absorb things best by breathing them in, slowly, over time?). Thus, you can go into your group knowing what to expect from your own heart’s response. We called it “Bare Before Him”—because when else are you invited into a safe enough space that you can be bare? He likes it when you’re bare, and if we’re all honest with ourselves, to be “bare” before Him takes some serious life practice. For this group, you can be bare—in private—before you share what’s maybe a little less bare with others. It’s safe.

I’d encourage you not to glide over the Scripture verses in this study nor in the “For Your Continued Pursuit” section at the bottom of each chapter within *Unseen*, but to see them as the meat of this time that you have to process with Him. Give yourself an invitation to approach His Word as the most important part of your heart laid bare.

**The questions for the larger group (“Linking Arms with Others”) are sparse—on purpose.** We’ve given you just a few, so as to offer you the opportunity to take time and linger over certain parts of your heart and mind that surface as you read. Rather than “checking off a box,” I invite you to give space for the unfurling of lives and stories circled up in the room where you meet.

And let’s remind each other that some people open with no invitation, while others might take weeks, months, and years to bare their hearts before another’s observation. The ones who sit back quietly in your group may just need time to absorb the words of others before they’re ready to speak themselves.

The verses in this section, as well, are your meat (not just a nice, little add-on). We need a place to root as we ever so slowly unfurl before others.

If you’re not sure how to use the Scriptural references, start your time with one—pray it over your group, then read another and ask what it stirs as you read. **Finish your time praying another one of them as a sweet declaration, or by utilizing the prayer we’ve put under “Taking It to Him”**—sometimes it helps to use another’s words to nudge you into prayer.

**The final section (“Putting It into Practice”) offers an exclamation point for what happened before you came, and what was revealed as you sat with others, and what He wants to do in you in the mundane minutes of your day.** I suggest you approach this one outside of your typical “quiet time.” Light a candle in the middle of a day and lock the door, or read it before bed. Carve out an hour on a Saturday at a park, and spend it with Him. Use these questions and verses to initiate an “outside of your norm” conversation with God.
We all want lives that are unconventional, reaching for the unseen amidst our Starbucks runs and kids’ soccer games and 9-5 schedules. Sometimes we need to introduce an approach to God that’s outside of our previous boxes to remind ourselves that He wants to lift us out of “normal” in our insides. Let this book and study guide be a nudge in that direction.

One last (very big) thing:

The movement of God is mysterious and often intangible. We need the help of His Spirit and His Word in order to clasp our hand around His and lean in to His movement—in our hearts and in the lives of the others in our group.

Prayer, here, isn’t an addendum; it’s our lifeline.

It may be awkward that this same group of people that you may have had over for bunko or Sunday afternoon football has now morphed into a book club. Let’s be honest: group prayer can often be awkward for all of us. Communing with the unseen God, alongside others, isn’t natural at first. Just tap into that deep belly laughing as you go, and invite Him to move through your weak but open hearts.

And regardless of how it feels, pray…pray.

I’m honored that you’ve invited my story into your circle. I am asking God that you would walk away with a heart that is more hungry for Him than when you came.

—Sara Hagerty, author of Unseen
(with Amy Wicks, author of this companion book study)
CHAPTER 1

The entrance of Your words gives light;  
It gives understanding to the simple.  
Psalm 119:130

“God designed us to hide in Him, not perform for Him.”  
Sara Hagerty

BARE BEFORE HIM

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”  
1 Samuel 16:7

1. Maybe this term or concept of hiddenness is a completely new thought process for you. When you consider the times you’ve been unseen, how does it make you feel?

2. Hidden aspects of life might include:
   - working a mundane job
   - carrying private grief
   - walking through parenting differently than you expected
   - living in singleness for longer than you wanted
   - moving to a new city where you are mostly unknown
   - walking through a misunderstanding you are unable to explain to anyone else
   - and more

What emotions have surfaced as you’ve walked out one of these, or a similar area, of hiddenness?
Sara writes about her time in the quiet storefront in the Barracks Road Shopping Center as a place where she met God. She began to realize “Just as children need to be seen, need to see their reflection in the eyes of a loving parent, I needed to see God seeing me as I spent hours in the stillness of that store.”

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!  
   How vast is the sum of them!  
If I would count them, they are more than the sand.  
   I awake, and I am still with you.  
Psalm 139:17-18

3. Psalm 139 speaks of God having thoughts beyond what we can count or conceive, and in the context of a passage about how He formed and made us. When was there a time when you received a thought that God had towards you from His Word in a way that impacted your heart?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Write out Ephesians 3:17&18

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
As Sara settled into the ordinary life of the quiet store (instead of a position with great impact), she brushed up against some of her buried thinking. Unexpected shame and feelings of insignificance surfaced after a friend from the past “caught” her not producing. The desire to quit and run to significance threatened to consume her thinking.

4. As you relate to the discomfort of Sara’s experience, what situations cause you to experience unsettling discontentment?

“How do You see me, especially now when I feel unproductive and unsuccessful? How do You see me when I feel naked without my life’s impact to hide behind?” Sara Hagerty

5. Discuss your current (honest) wondering of God’s stance towards you when you are unproductive.

“…a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.” Mark 14:3b

“…the kind of unhinged love that lays everything at His feet whether or not anyone else ever sees, approves, or applauds.” Sara Hagerty

**Taking It to Him**

_Thank You for caring for the inner workings of my heart. Lead me to thoughtful looks toward You throughout my day. Keep my eyes focused on You, Jesus. The One who initiates this relationship with me and the process which perfects my faith. Teach my heart to sing within the invitation of the hidden place._

**Putting It into Practice**

Write out your raw, unfiltered (perhaps even awkward!) thoughts as you meditate on Hebrews 12:2

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

9
CHAPTER 2

Oh Lord, You have searched me and known me!
Psalm 139:1

“We hunger for significance—to be seen and understood and loved, to be and live marvelous—because we are made not only to know God but also to be known by Him.”
Sara Hagerty

BARE BEFORE HIM

Immediately the father of the child cried out[a] and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”
Mark 9:24

“When my dreams aren’t being fulfilled, I’m invited to search the one who gives the dreams in the first place.” Sara Hagerty

1. Is there an aspect of God’s character that (if you are being honest) you have serious doubts about or don’t really believe?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
Matthew 23:11-12

As Sara wrestles with her understanding of Matt. 23:11-12, she noticed a disconnect with her longings to be seen and the teachings that seemed to say that these desires were wrong—thus she made an effort to squelch her desires. She shares that she “shoved them deep inside and came to loathe that part of me that wanted to be noticed. I felt disgusted by any part of me that didn’t line up with my regarded understanding of what it means to serve.”
2. In what areas of service have you found yourself craving the look of another or acknowledgment?


“Our human eyes can betray the truth of the story we are living.” Sara Hagerty

3. Sara knew that showing her daughter a video of the dance recital would change the story Sara saw that night and the one her daughter lived. What are things you’ve noticed that, when looking through your own lens, bring shame, disappointment, or embarrassment?


Write out Psalm 139:15&16


LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS

Read together Philippians 3:10-14

...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

Philippians 3:10

Sara shares about her summer serving at the camp in the Adirondacks—waiting tables serving in the hot dinning hall. She grew fascinated by the crew of six serving in “the pits.” They seemed to be the unfortunate few, unobserved by others over their 30 days elbow-deep in dirty dishwater all day long.

4. What has felt like “the pits” in your own life?
So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.
2 Corinthians 4:16

“Hidden servanthood is drudgery when we’re intent on praise from others. And it is also drudgery when we tell ourselves that our desires for recognition and praise don’t matter.” Sara Hagerty

5. Have you ever been overlooked for a position or had to leave an opportunity you greatly admired only to find yourself in an unseen place that felt like a waste?

Read Luke 10:38-42

“…Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her.”

“Mary had eyes for one. Her motives were oriented toward Him.” Sara Hagerty

6. Describe that “better thing” that Mary chose.

7. As far as you can tell, what are the hindrances getting in the way of your pursuit of that “better thing”?

12
**Taking It to Him**

Lord, You are the One who created me with the desire to be seen, known and valued. You know how I long to be noticed and to matter to someone. Show me what I mistakenly look to for validation instead of Your affirmation. Surprise me with new understanding of Your unconditional love today.

**Putting It into Practice**

Write out your raw, unfiltered thoughts as you meditate on Mark 10:45.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

13
Chapter 3

He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
Psalm 1:3

“Winter gives birth to spring not just in the tree but in us.”
Sara Hagerty

Bare Before Him

Read John 11:1-44

But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.
John 11:4

“Most of the time, we don’t reach for God until we have to. Our hardest circumstances are often the ones God uses to call forth the deeper reach for Him” Sara Hagerty

1. Sometimes, by our outward appearances, we are flying towards mystery in our relationship with God, enjoying a lengthy spring and summer…but as sure as the seasons change, winter comes. What now feels dead in your life, hopeless, and without evidence of noticeable fruit?

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.
1 Corinthians 13:12
Sara’s dream left her agitated and with that feeling, she knew what her daughter would have experienced when hearing “no” to something she really wanted. “The rush of excitement, then the disappointment. The feeling of being the only one left out. The sting of your parents’ betraying you, begrudging you something you want so much.”

2. How are you experiencing disappointment in God, because of things you’ve asked Him that have been seemingly unanswered, or from unfulfilled dreams you’ve had?

“I grieved for the story I wanted her to have instead of the one she was living.” Sara Hagerty

Sara grew to resent the lost years of her daughter’s history—the way those years overshadowed her little girl and those haunting, unanswerable questions provoked by the unknown early days of her life. The discovery of the baby teeth at the bottom of Sara’s purse happened just as she needed a reminder that He hadn’t missed a thing—showing her that what she’d considered to be a loss was merely hidden from her view.

3. What in your history feels impossibly lost or irreplaceable to you?

Write out John 15:1-2

**LINKING ARMS with OTHERS**

Read together Matthew 10:29-31

Sara had so many plans as a college student and as a wife and as mom. And she is filled with plans still today that are both shared and hidden. She talks about her plans often needing dormancy, like winter—a time to rest. Often, finding these winters shifted her heart to want Him more than the original plans themselves did, calling forth a deeper reach for Him.
“And if I let Him winterize me, He will deepen my roots and help me to stretch my branches toward Him—for my good and for His glory.”
Sara Hagerty

4. What plans (shared and hidden) are experiencing a winter in your life?

For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred days wages and given to the poor. And they scolded her.
Mark 14:5

Mary of Bethany may have also had many plans, fulfilled and unfulfilled. Most likely, the spikenard oil she carried around her neck was her savings account, not an impulse purchase. She’d likely had it with her longer than she had known Jesus. He had shown her dignity and kindness, defying cultural norms, and taught her truth in a time when no one bothered to educate women. So, compelled by His kindness and the extravagant love she experienced when she was with Him, Mary let go of her plans and poured it at His feet. Those watching may have thought her to be foolish, but to Jesus it indicated eternal greatness.

“In a moment, her plans suddenly meant nothing to her. Letting go of them, while uncomfortable and unfamiliar, empowered her.” Sara Hagerty

5. What is one area of your life where you could consider His story for you first and not be hindered by thinking about how others might see it as foolish?

6. Is there a time when you’ve done this already—and if so, talk about it what it was like to choose His story above others’ opinions and commentary?

Taking It to Him

Lord, you see it all. Nothing is lost from Your vision. Show me what is merely hidden from my sight, but that You have not forgotten. As I grieve through my losses or with those around me help me to feel Your embrace through it all. Open
my eyes to the divine timing of discovery to those intimate questions in our lives. By Your Spirit, reveal to us what we cannot comprehend, but that You have planned for us.

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

Write out your unfiltered thoughts as you meditate on Romans 11:33-36. Take your time and turn them into a prayer as you write.
CHAPTER 4

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
Colossians 2:6–7

“But the sweetest greatness starts with being rooted, being made and nurtured in secret, being seen by God alone.”
Sara Hagerty

BARE BEFORE HIM

Read Psalm 139:1–6

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Psalm 139:15

“But there are always two stories in a person—the visible story and the invisible story— and only one set of eyes that sees them both.” Sara Hagerty

1. In what areas of life do you feel outwardly unsuccessful? This may take more than a minute to consider. How have they caused you to wear shame on the inside?

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”
1 Samuel 16:7
At the time of her graduation, Sara, equated greatness with the experience of accomplishing much for Jesus, all the while seeing earthly success in position and recognition. “If it mattered, I measured it. If couldn’t measure it, it didn’t matter.”

2. As we are honest with ourselves, saying “no” to a leadership position, serving friends without thanks, letting a task list remain unfinished, or comforting a sick child at two in the morning can make us feel like we are taking several steps back in our trajectory towards success. How are you currently measuring and documenting growth within your life?

“Greatness begins underground. In secret.” Sara Hagerty

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God. 2 Corinthians 3:4-5

3. We are often driven by our own feats of accomplishment and the bragging rights to go with them, indulged by society. We often feel the temporary satisfaction of what we crave by the productivity accomplished by our hands—missing an invitation to pour out before Him in private. What have you said, or are you now saying “yes” to because it is easier to perform a task or accomplish something or check off a list?

Write out Jeremiah 17:7-8
**LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS**

Read together Matthew 13:4-9

“It is the work that happens beneath the surface, deep in the soil of our hearts, that in time produces a great harvest of fruit and growth.” Sara Hagerty

No one may notice that to which you say “no” in order to find more time with God—choosing your Bible over checking email, praying with your friend instead of working on the thing you secretly love to put your hand to, or turning off the podcast so you can sit in quiet with the Lord.

4. What are your interruptions, distractions, or the things in your life that you’re waiting to shift in order to finally be able to find more time with God?

---

*But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

2 Corinthians 12:9

Sara’s daughter showed great promise to the piano teacher who was observing her natural skills and talents. She poured herself into practice even when she thought no one was watching. When it came time to perform for others, Sara’s young, skilled pianist suddenly fumbled, envisioning the eyes on her to be taunting, as did those from her memories in Africa. Her confidence was sunk, causing her heart to sit in shame. “What her human audience might have thought and what her wounded imagination perceived were both drastically different from what God thought of her.” Sara Hagerty

5. In what ways have you seen your internal or external weakness (true or perceived) to be taunting your heart?

---

---

---

20
...And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.
Luke 8:24

When Mary gave her “yes” to Jesus, she literally poured out her security and recognition, with no way of going back. She participated in His story of greatness and everything and everyone else dimmed in comparison. When she got near to Him, her life became greater.

6. When was a time that you, like Mary, felt the nearness of Jesus—His beauty, power and protection? What was your response? (If an instance like this doesn’t come to the surface of your memory, consider asking the group to pray for this specific thing for you.)

TAKING IT TO HIM

Lord give me glimpses of Your beauty, Your power, and Your protection, so Your truth would take root in my heart, sinking deep in the knowledge of your love. Help me to see what greatness looks like to You. Give me the ability to find my weakness to be the place where You are made perfect and glorified. As I sow my seeds of faith, give me deep roots to anchor down deep, such that no matter the outcome, You are enough.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Write out your raw, unfiltered thoughts as you meditate on Psalm 52:8-9. Take your time in turning those thoughts into prayer—perhaps even from a place of weakness and honesty that is fresh and new to you.
Chapter 5

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
Hebrews 4:13

“We haven’t been hidden by God to suffer or to be punished; we’ve been wooed into hiding to meet with the God who turns vulnerability into communion.”
Sara Hagerty

Bare Before Him

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21

At first glance Sara judged the woman who seemed to be making herself a spectacle before others. How could she be dancing so unashamedly? As she prayed, Sara quickly sensed God’s heart for this woman. Sharing a brief conversation with this woman, she learned of her unseen story of loss and emptiness. This woman had learned to fall in love with God through pain.

“Barrenness is about what you don’t have, so it often goes undetected.”
Sara Hagerty

1. What untold story of your life (recent or in the past) causes you to hide your grief, and to need a new sort of encounter with God?
And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

Genesis 3:10

“‘Embarrassment is actually sin,’ says my husband, who knows my self-protective and self-preserving ways. I might say instead, ‘Embarrassment reveals sin.’” Sara Hagerty

2. Sometimes our embarrassment reveals that our highest goal is to preserve the image we’ve created for ourselves and we hide in self-condemnation, anger, or numbing comfort. Is there a sin (hidden or seen) in your life that the Lord might be further exposing in order to lead you to a freeing repentance?

“He welcomes us when we’re vulnerable because He knows what it is like to be vulnerable.” Sara Hagerty

And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. Matthew 27:30

3. Jesus experienced greater rejection and vulnerability than most of us will ever know. His weakness without sin prompted the same cry as we often find rising within us: God, be near. In His repeated acts of vulnerability, Jesus gives us permission to do the same: be weak and undone. How might this permission reframe your circumstances even though they may not change?

Write out 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS

Read together Psalm 31:1-5

“Surrender is vulnerable, and this choice to risk vulnerably with God takes practice.” Sara Hagerty
The practice of a Sabbath Saturday in the Hagerty home might sound blissful, but often leaves Sara feeling “a combination of empty, squirmmy and uncertain.” Deeper thoughts and feelings surface when she can no longer hide behind productivity. She has chosen to allow Saturdays to lead her into a more “present” mind before God and to move her further towards a greater surrender unto Him.

4. How can you identify with Sara’s sense of emptiness and uncertainty without tasks to hide behind?

5. How could you add a practice of some form of a “Sabbath” in your life—allowing tasks to pile up for even just a few hours to breathe and find white space?

…and [Jesus] said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3

“Up, please.” To be this needy, weak, or vulnerable seems just too much to ask. We’d really rather not be like a child or have a need for God. “Because wouldn’t we all rather learn the hard lessons about love in a tidy sermon than in the rough and tumble of our lives?” Sara Hagerty

6. What would it look like for you to invite God more personally into the places where you are working so hard to be strong—the places you’d rather numb, escape from, or shut down?

… and [Mary] anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. John 12:3
7. As Mary let down her hair she stripped herself of self-preservation and dove into a deeper surrender to Him. How can you make her moment of surrender to be as if it were yours, in the everyday moments? Suggest to the group one new way that you might lean in towards “letting your hair down” and surrendering to Him this week.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Taking It to Him

Search me and know me Lord. Against You I have sinned. Create in me a pure heart, honest and wise. Thank you Lord for giving me a fresh start, free from shame and condemnation. As I become vulnerable, help me to run to You instead of to the familiar places where I hide.

Putting It into Practice

Write out your thoughts as you meditate on Matthew 18:3 and let those thoughts slowly turn into a personal prayer to Him, perhaps even from a weaker place than you’re used to.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
CHAPTER 6

And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”
Luke 5:26

“Wonder means cracking open our eyes to see God, who is seeing us, all the time.”
Sara Hagerty

BARE BEFORE HIM

1. Sara identifies the multiple ways in which all the brief glances around her, snippets of social media or the achievements of her friends and neighbors, often form the impossible checklist against which she is tempted to measure herself. What are the subtle ways you’ve seen yourself mimicking what you see around you? How do you allow what you absorb from the world to inform your thinking?

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18

“When we approach God with an open, mindful, hungry heart, we position ourselves not only to see His beauty but to let it change us.”
Sara Hagerty

2. The Lord often speaks to us in the stillness, in the subtle whispers displayed within creation. What does wonder look like to you? How could you practice a “wonder hour” similar to what Sara began to practice, even if it were only 15 minutes, to cultivate a heart-stance of seeing Him in the unlikely places of your day?
Write out 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS


“Internal stillness takes practice. It is the fruit of hiddenness—a life that’s lived looking at God, a life of wonder in Him—and it needs to be cultivated.” Sara Hagerty

3. God is in the business of interrupting our days, desiring our affections more than our works, but often we get too busy tasking to listen. What are some recent ways God may have been interrupting you, giving you these invitations to look a little longer at Him?

As Sara fumed over the events of her morning, the Lord caught her eye with a broken egg shell causing her to pause and wonder. Suddenly even the smallest, seemingly insignificant elements of her day and life were provoking her heart to praise God, even within the mess.

“God was inviting me to reconsider the ever-unfolding opportunities for wonder around me.” Sara Hagerty

4. What thoughts, behaviors, or relationships might begin to shift for you as you choose to notice the wonder within the very smallest things?
The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.
John 12: 3

“The house fill with the fragrance of oil. The whole earth fills with His glory. My soul fills with awareness of His wonder. Today.” Sara Hagerty

5. Take a minute to corporately whisper: “God, You are the best thing I have going today.” This may be under your breath or together, one-by-one, as a group—however it looks, pause and tell Him in such a way that your heart and your feelings can follow this truth.

Taking It to Him

Lord, I come expectant. Shift my thoughts towards Yours. I’m expectant. Thank you that all we have to do is call out for You and You will answer. Cause my eyes to gaze upon Your beauty and cause me to want to dwell in Your presence. Help me to look away from the false checklist the world would present to me (and that my insides keep note of) and help me to instead measure my days by Your standards. Cause my heart to wonder at the good works of Your hands.

Putting It into Practice

Write out your own raw prayer to God as you meditate on Psalm 139:16-18.
CHAPTER 7

For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.
John 12:43

“Hiddenness turns dutiful workers into lovers of God.
To stay in love, we must resist the culture.
To resist the culture, we must stay in love.”
Sara Hagerty

Bare Before Him

Read Matthew 6:30–32

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 6:33

Sara began to reach the end of her day tired, but craving more—more brushes and meaning with God and more of exchanging her ideas for His thoughts.

1. Describe a time, perhaps recently, when you’ve experienced this craving—your heart being hungry? If you haven’t experienced this before, you’re not alone. Pause here and pray: God, would you stir up hunger within me for You? He loves the simple ask.

The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.
I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments.
Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.
Psalm 119:130–132
“I remember it only because I’d felt seen and heard by God.”
Sara Hagerty

Sara remembers a specific business trip and her intention to look for opportunities to be nudged by the Lord. She experienced God’s pleasure and a personal exchange with Him as she stepped out of her comfort zone. She felt the profound surprise over God being near enough to meet her at an airport barstool.

2. At this moment, in what area of your life would you want to know that you are seen and heard by God?

O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells. Psalm 26:8

“Stay there for just a little while longer than you’re used to and, over time, it will no longer feel strange to orient your schedule around being in that place.” Sara Hagerty

3. Even when everything pulls at you to go on with your day, what would it look like for you to stay a little longer in conversation with the Lord?

Write out Galatians 1:10

LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS

Read together Jeremiah 9:23–24
“We’re forever on the lookout for new ways to infuse our otherwise mundane lives with measurable impact.” Sara Hagerty

4. We trade in what He has to offer and let ourselves be satisfied with so little. Sara asks herself the same question that many of us have likely had bounce around within our minds, in different forms: “Is this all there is?” Describe a time or season when you’ve felt this.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:23–24

5. Sara reminds us this is merely the training place where we build our craving for God. We were made for this. If this life is merely training for our callings within eternity, how does that impact how you see your goal here on earth? Your day-to-day here on earth?

And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste?” Matthew 26:8

“Extravagant, hidden giving to Jesus at the expense of publicly productive Christian service will always offend. Yes, even Christians.” Sara Hagerty

Maybe it wasn’t easy to pour out her extravagance, but maybe it became Mary’s joy because she loved Him so.

6. From whom are you most afraid of experiencing rejection should you choose to “waste” more on Him? Note: this question digs deep. Some of you may need to think on this for longer than just a few minutes, while, for others, it may be immensely freeing to name this and speak it out.
**TAKing It to Him**

Oh God, I want to taste and see Your goodness. Help me to long for Your glances, the brushes with You—that nothing else would satisfy my soul like You do. When I get afraid of walking out my extravagant love for You, give me the boldness I need from You. Place joy in me as I waste my time, energies, and resources because I love You so. And free me from the fear of rejection and the praise of man such that I could waste more on You.

**PUTting It into Practice**

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:15

“Lovers will always outwork workers.” Sara Hagerty

This week’s study looks a little different, as we will take some practical steps towards leaning in to what God has for us in our hidden spaces and the hidden seasons of our lives. We are transactional beings who so readily look to productivity as our measuring stick—thus we could use some help in how to settle into friendship with Him.

This particular chapter and accompanying study will dive a bit deeper in our personal time. There are six different suggestions here for you to consider implementing. You could try one a day or read through each and choose one with which to linger for your entire week.

When you gather as a group, here are a few questions to answer after you’ve had some time grappling with the content below in private:

1. Which of the following practical suggestions most resonated with you and why?
2. Where did you find yourself stuck as you walked these out?
3. How did you see fruit in your life as a result of walking one (or many) of these out?
4. Which one of these might you take beyond this particular week and turn into a more regular practice?

Finish your time as a group praying for one another, asking God for assistance as you take new steps towards leaning in to hiddenness.

Sara has highlighted six training prompts on which we will take some time to reflect and make personal.

“Re-patterning. Spending time with Him in hiddenness orients us toward that re-patterning.” Sara Hagerty
1) LOOK AT HIM FIRST THING. EACH DAY

Write out Psalm 5:3

“In the rawest, most vulnerable part of my day, I position myself as needy and attentive.” Sara Hagerty

THINKING IT THROUGH

Before running through the list of what you didn’t do and have yet before you in your day, God invites your gaze to be directed towards Him. Yes, even if it’s blurry-eyed. When, in the early parts of your day, could you pause and seek Him first?

TAKING THAT FIRST STEP

In advance, think through how you would you like to start your conversation with God before your feet hit the ground. Plan for that morning when you’ll practice looking at Him first.

2) GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO START WHERE YOU ARE AND TO START SMALL

“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:6

“He was beginning to infuse the minutia of my day.” Sara Hagerty
We often overcomplicate our communication and conversation with the Lord. Seeing our time to converse with Him as a flowery, set-apart moment instead of breath-like sentences voicing our daily (sometimes hourly) needs, desires, and gratitude. How have you seen yourself hindered in prayer because of unrealistic expectations of how it should look?

—

“Tiny prayers assume more of God than they do of us. They acknowledge that He is big enough to receive a small request and respond.”
Sara Hagerty

**Taking that First Step**

Write out the Lord’s prayer in your own words—and, yes, with your gratitude, your fears and concerns, and your specific requests. Use Matthew 6:9-13 as your framework.

Then, write it out again in its exact form. As you do so, consider one or two phrases (we’re talking 3-5 words total) that you could carry with you, or utter under your breath on a particular day as you go about your life. Consider jotting those down on a notecard or putting them in a place you might see them intermittently throughout your day, as a reminder to pray those tiny prayers.

*In your own words:*

—

—

—

—

*As it’s written in His Word:*

—

—

—

—
3) Follow Jesus’ example of being tethered to God

“For Jesus, conversations with God began with desire, not discipline. He stayed close to God. Tethered.” Sara Hagerty

Write out John 17:21-22

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thinking it Through

What do you enjoy doing with your friends—how have you built friendship with those closest to you? How could these activities translate into an equivalent time you spend building friendship with God?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Taking that First Step

You have an invitation. What would it look like this week for you to invest in building a friendship with God? Take that first step.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4) Speak the Word of God. Out loud

Write out Romans 10:17

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

We can hear and read the Word of God, but once we start to speak and pray the Word of God the scriptures begin to take on a life of their
own—powerful, effective, life-changing, and even transformative of our circumstances. Truth spoken aloud can replace the doubts and fears that create the unspoken traffic within our mind and hearts.

**THINKING IT THROUGH**

What are the current doubts and fears with which you wrestle most?

---

---

**TAKING THAT FIRST STEP**

If you are experiencing doubt, fear, or need wisdom, look up these verses. Pray one or two that especially resonate with you. But don’t do it just once—pray them every time you feel that fear, doubt, or desperate need for wisdom rise up within you.

In response to **fear**:  
John 14:27  
Joshua 1:9  
Isaiah 43:1  
Psalm 23:4  
Psalm 34:4  
Psalm 27:1  
1 Peter 5:6  
2 Timothy 1:7  
1 John 4:18

In response to **doubt**:  
Proverbs 3:5–7  
Philippians 4:6–7  
Psalm 27:13–14  
Matthew 7:7–8  
Jeremiah 29:11–13  
1 Peter 5:8–10  
Isaiah 41:10

If you’re needing **wisdom** and His insight:  
1 Kings 4:29  
Job 28:28  
Psalm 51:6  
Proverbs 8:11  
2 Corinthians 1:12  
James 1:5  
James 3:17

37
“We have God’s Truth and we can wield it. We can put it in our mouths and speak it, sing it, and declare it, because it is true.” Sara Hagerty

5) Adore God

“In adoration, we take a phrase or sentence of God’s Word, we see what those words say about who God is, and we speak them back to Him and to our own souls. We pattern our words toward praise in the midst of whatever we are feeling.” Sara Hagerty

If we wait to feel the desire to adore God we may never be willing to engage with Him (or with our hearts) in this way. The beauty of adoration is to start exactly where we are, in the middle of the mess of our lives. The process of adoration reminds our deep souls of who God really is, exactly as His Word tells us. We read the Word and speak it back to Him and to our fickle hearts—especially so in the personal areas where we struggle to see Him as He really is.

Thinking it Through

When someone talks about experiencing God in this specific way [fill in the blank for you]________________, you struggle to understand or believe the same.

Give yourself some time with this one. Call to mind certain scenarios or conversations in which you’ve had a friend or family member or pastor or teacher describe a particular aspect of God, one with which you just couldn’t personally resonate.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Taking that First Step

Look up these verses in an area where you might need help believing that He is who He says He is and speak them out loud. Move from speaking towards praying, adoring—simultaneously asking Him to show you Himself in this way and telling Him how you have already seen Him in this way, however small. [Note: you can find many more adoration prompts at [sarahagerty.net](http://sarahagerty.net) under “printables.”]

Scripture on His faithful provision:
Luke 12:30
Psalm 51:12
Philippians 4:19
Ephesians 3:20-21
Romans 8:32

Scripture on **His goodness:**
Psalm 115:14-15
Psalm 13:6
Romans 8:32
Psalm 84:11
John 1:16

Scripture about **His protection:**
2 Samuel 22:3-4
Psalm 31:2
Psalm 60:11-12
Psalm 125:2
1 Corinthians 10:13

“‘God, You didn’t give Your secret to just the wealthy or the kings,’ [my son] Caleb said, ‘You told them to people nobody cared about.’”
Sara Hagerty

6) **Recognize the truth about yourself in light of who God is**

*But the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.*
Psalm 147:11

*...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*
Ephesians 1:4

“We all struggle to believe His delight.” Sara Hagerty

**Thinking it Through**

Sara took time to share the big and small ways she delighted in her daughter and began to point out how the Lord feels the same. What are the little things about yourself in which you might consider the Lord’s delight in you? Pause in prayer. Ask Him to call these to mind as you pray.
TAKING THAT FIRST STEP

Take this page or feel free to use a separate space to express the truth of Psalm 18:19 (script, draw, paint, convey in a way that’s unique to you).
Bare Before Him

Read Matthew 5:38–42

But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:39

We are all guilty of being too consumed with our own crises or weighty thoughts and inadvertently mistreating others—but what about those times when we are hurt by those who know us best? Misunderstanding and judgment from those in whom we are emotionally invested (and whose opinion matters to us) is especially painful. Sara exhorts us to see these times as a gift, a time when we can scoot up next to Him and ask God who we really are.

“No human can give us the accolades that will satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts.” Sara Hagerty

1. In what relationship do you need to see Him as your champion? How might He win over new places in your heart within this particular relationship?

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10
“When we let shameful lies speak louder than vulnerable expressions of our true selves, we are missing a meeting with God.” Sara Hagerty

2. Take a few minutes to jot down those self-defeating, less-than, or ashamed thoughts you entertain and with which you all too often agree. Thoughts like: “I’m never going to change.” “I’m not worth sticking-it-out with.” “I’m setting myself up for another big failure.”

After writing, consider: what does it feel like to name them? How often do you entertain thoughts like these? Might you perhaps see how they are more pervasive than you considered?

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
Philippians 4:8

3. Sara reminds us, “Power is in speaking what is true.” When the accusations and lies threaten to defeat us, we must refuse to agree with them and renounce them with God’s truth, His Word. Let’s put these ideas into practice with the honest thoughts you wrote down for question two.

1st- Renounce (saying the opposite and what is true) the lie. Actually writing it out may be of help to those of you who are visual.

2nd- Repent for agreeing with the enemy and disregarding the hope you have in Jesus.
3rd- Read and recite (sing, say, pray) the Word of God. Using the book of Psalms as a guide, or other scripture that comes to mind that speaks to the opposite of the lies you’ve been believing, actively choose to put aside these lies and declare what is true.

Linking Arms with Others

*And they scolded her.*
Mark 14:5

“His voice had become bigger to her than any other voice, any other noise.” Sara Hagerty

Mary had developed a history with Jesus—time spent, experiences shared both among the crowds and after the others had long dispersed. The criticism directed toward her was surely felt, but Jesus’ voice had become louder or more tender—more real—than the noise around her. 4. Whose voice do you need to quiet and what might help you to develop a habit of valuing Jesus’ voice above all others?

Read together 1 Peter 4:12–14

Just like Sara’s daughter, we can sometimes take an altercation and twist it, using it to prove what we are already feeling on the inside. Accusing voices can fill up the space in our mind until nothing is left for God’s voice—His rest and peace and truth.

“…every single thought matters. The thoughts that don’t bow to God will give permission to another god.” Sara Hagerty
For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

5. Sometimes we need help finding the Scriptures to combat the lies we’ve believed for so long. Share with the group some of the verses you discovered during your “read and recite” in question three. There’s a chance you can help another friend to see truth or perhaps you will hear the exact Word you needed for today.

On the day I called, you answered me; my strength of soul you increased. Psalm 138:3

“It’s one thing to get rid of the noise. It’s another thing to know how to invite Him into the white space.” Sara Hagerty

6. It’s not always easy to invite Him into the silence and let go of the noise—to have an exchange with Him that no one else will know about. Pray for one another, asking the Lord to show each person the invitation He has for them today.

Taking It To Him

Revive my heart with Your words and Your truth. Let it rise above the noise, God. My soul is weary with trouble. Would you strengthen me according to your Word? You came so we might have life, and life more full. Equip me with Your weaponry so I can stand against the enemy’s desire to destroy my life. You—who began a good work in me—would you complete it, by Your power and strength?

Putting It into Practice

Give yourself a slightly extended white space to meditate upon and pray through Isaiah 26:3. Write out your prayer as you do.
CHAPTER 10

For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.
They shall spring up among the grass
like willows by flowing streams.
Isaiah 44:3-4

“Our weakness, and yours, can come glorious thirst for God.
What some may call the end of us, the ruin of us, can bring us closer
to God than any one of our strongest days.”
Sara Hagerty

BARE BEFORE HIM

Read Psalm 63:1-8

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
Psalm 63:1

We often go through life looking for that elusive “strong place” where
suddenly everything falls into place and there is no more struggle. Sara
encourages us to “die to this illusion of strength [we’ve] created.” God
wants to bring us to places where we can realize how weak we really are
so we can find our desperate need for Him.

1. In what area of your life do you continually find yourself saying
“When I get ‘there’, I will finally…”

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

46
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:6

“It took hidden times, desperate times, for me to practice leaning into my weakness rather than despising them.” Sara Hagerty

2. What might it look like for you to tolerate or allow for thirst long enough to find more of God—to stay in your uncomfortable weakness without despising the neediness?

“When our thirst for more of God depends upon our awareness of how much we need Him, our capacity for Him grows.” Sara Hagerty

3. Read Psalm 42 with fresh eyes and consider the deer—desperate in longing for thirst to be quenched. Write out the verse or two from this psalm that speaks most to your parched heart today.

LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS

But you will not always have me. Mark 14:7

“Mary was made to move from thirst to fulfillment to thirst again, only to look toward a forever fulfillment one day still to come.” Sara Hagerty

4. We often mistake our thirst for lack—lack of accomplishment, lack of true intimacy with others, and lack of commitments. Instead it’s the lack that fuels our thirst that ultimately leads us to fulfillment in Him…and then back to Him yet again.

What thirst have you been trying to quench with activity or distraction? Sometimes it helps to name what is getting in the way and bring it out into the safe and healing light of the Father. What have been the particular activities or distractions that, although perhaps good, have served to placate the deeper thirst within you?
Read together Isaiah 41:18-20

“I can welcome thirst when it prompts me to reach for God in the driest places.” Sara Hagerty

5. It would seem easier if Nate and Sara would refuse to acknowledge the ache and hurt from four of their children’s histories and to pretend as if all their loss never happened. You and I are often tempted to do the same—to gloss over what hurts and try to avoid need. But our wounds can also lead us to our most profound story in God. What pain, grief, emptiness, or obscurity tends to remind of your thirst? [Note: answers to questions like this are not often near the surface. Give yourself some time on this one to “collect data” and take note as you consider what might be brewing deeper inside. Some in your group may be readily able to answer and others may need days or even weeks to ponder further.]

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her.
Hosea 2:14

6. Take time to pray for one another in these tender areas that have been discussed—to specifically ask God for the ability to thirst…and to heal.

Taking It to Him

Lord I open my hands to You, wanting to receive what You provide for me. Fill my parched, dry soul. Help me reach to You as my healer. Hold me. Speak life to what needs reviving. Show me how I use empty tasks to fill my longings. Shift my heart to enable me to more easily draw refreshment from You alone.

Putting It into Practice

Hang out in John 7:37. Let yourself stay there even longer than you might otherwise. Pray to Him from this place.
CHAPTER 11

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.
Psalm 34:18

“Healing starts with acknowledging we’re broken. Seeing God as Healer starts with seeing ourselves in need of healing.”
Sara Hagerty

BARE BEFORE HIM

Read Isaiah 55:8–12

For you shall go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Isaiah 55:12

Over time, we can get stuck within our hurt. It can become our identity, in which we’ve subtly convinced ourselves we are beyond repair, unable to be restored. The steps of remembering (yikes! painful!) and acknowledging past hurts will create the emptiness that leads us to the God of healing and filling. Sara reminds us, “But for Him to speak a healing word over old wounds, we have to acknowledge them.”

1. What makes it difficult for you to ask, to pray: “What is in me that needs Your touch because ‘those’ words hurt? What is in me that You want to Heal?”

God isn’t looking to “fix” us so we can more qualified for His love. He heals us so we can know Him as Healer. It is simply who He is.
“I wanted more of the nearness I felt when I broke before Him.” Sara Hagerty

2. If the broken parts of us don’t disqualify us from His love, what pain, grief, or sin do you no longer need to hide from? [Note: this may take some time—days, even—to consider, before Him in prayer. Some of the most potent healing comes as a result of thoughtful consideration of our brokenness, with a mind towards His mending.]

“When we acknowledge the parts of us that are broken, we have significant growth spurts in God.” Sara Hagerty

…to grant to those who mourn in Zion—

  to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
  the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
  the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
  that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
  the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:3

3. Sara’s dream about her dad made her come to realize her underlying longing for God’s affirmation, His approval. As she grieved her loss on a deeper level, she was able to experience the Lord as tender, personal, and patient. Where might you need God’s “wink” of approval most in your life right now?

LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS

She has done a beautiful thing to me.
Mark 14:6

“And He healed her as He spoke of her, transforming her sacrifice from waste to beauty.” Sara Hagerty

4. As Jesus spoke of Mary’s sacrifice, He not only affirmed and healed her, but He subsequently used her for a leading role in His resurrection
story, His act of healing for the entire world. Sometimes we need to see what God values—what Jesus has His eyes upon in another—in order for us to begin to value what He values in us.

Think of the women in your group, your best friend, or someone who’s path you’ve only just now crossed in these recent weeks. Consider them through God’s eyes and ask Him for His heart for them and their story.

For some of you, as you do, He might nudge you to verbally, or in writing, encourage them with what you see—later, outside of the group. How does the process of seeing another’s story through His eyes expand your view of His perspective on your own story?

Read Psalm 51:1-12 together

“And the longing that comes from being hidden makes us more aware of our brokenness, more receptive to His healing, that we’d ever be in the light of the world’s applause.” Sara Hagerty

5. Sometimes replacing the value we place on others’ opinions of us requires the willingness to be raw about our sins with one another, to confess, and ask for prayer. Take time in the next day or two to share with someone (in your study group or another trusted friend) who will support your vulnerability. Ask them for prayer as you acknowledge your brokenness and invite Him to speak to you.

Taking It to Him

Lord, Your Word says that You do not reject a broken and repentant heart. I bring what I have to You. I come to You from a place of deep need. Bring wisdom and healing to the parts of me that I may not even fully understand. Take me to the hiding place—where I hide in You—the place protected from the opinions of others, where my fears can’t touch me. Show me Your nod of approval, Your tenderness and patience with me.
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Meditate on Ezekiel 47:12. Write out a personal prayer to Him as you do.
**Chapter 12**

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

Ezekiel 36:26

“God made us in secret. We grow in secret. But that secret place is not a void. He stays in the secret, right there with us. That’s where we grow, deep.”

Sara Hagerty

**Bare Before Him**

Read 1 Corinthians 1:27-29

*For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

1 Corinthians 1:25

“I’ve come to believe that familiarity is the enemy of anyone who wants to fall in love with God.” Sara Hagerty

1. Sara talks about her little boy comparing the airplane in the sky to the car with which he is already familiar. He names it a “jumping car.” His sweet, finite mind tries to make sense of a world of which he can barely grasp the breadth. This is how we often approach God, through the lens of familiarity. What sides of Him feel especially familiar? What sides of Him do you see yourself engaging with most? As you answer these questions, do other sides of Him come to mind that are not as familiar to you—ones that He might be inviting you to consider?

Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.”

John 12:7
“Mary understood His heart and His future in a way that only those who are intimate with God can.” Sara Hagerty

2. It was not only Mary’s understanding of the culture and traditions that gave her insight to prepare Him for his death with her love poured out, but it was her private connectedness to Jesus that gave her the confidence to give away her “livelihood” to Him. She was able to see beyond the temporal—and she was, then, one of the few who had a sense of what His words really meant. What might it look like, in your own life, to reach toward this place of contentedness—in partnering with God and in pouring out before Him in private?

“I prayed into what I couldn’t see, and because of what I couldn’t see I prayed with His eyes.” Sara Hagerty

3. Sara had no way to create a tangible scrapbook of memories for her girls’ babyhood and years that were unobserved by her eyes. So she asked for His heart and what He would have her pray. What can’t you see or understand right now? What feels dark and undisclosed, but for which you might need perspective and insight from the Lord?

**LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS**

“Much like the faith leaders and even those nearest disciples of Jesus’ time we too are at risk of missing Jesus, of failing to see who He really is, because of our attachments to the safe things we think we already understand about Him.” Sara Hagerty

*But, as it is written,*

*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,*

*nor the heart of man imagined,*

*what God has prepared for those who love him.*

1 Corinthians 2:9

4. What are some of the “safe” assumptions and understandings you hold about God?
Read together Ephesians 3:16–21

“Yet true growth in God requires that our perspective of Him grow with us.” Sara Hagerty

5. Share with the group the way or ways you desire to experience growth in Him.

It’s time to start dreaming some dreams—His dreams for our life that are much larger than our own. As we near the end of this study, it’s a beautiful time to pursue His thoughts and position ourselves to notice His work, not just in our life, but in others’ lives.

“Prayer tethers us to the truest reality, one that will never change. His.” Sara Hagerty

6. Though it is impossible to truly share or gain full understanding into one another’s inner dialogue with the Lord, take this time to pray for one another, that your conversation with God in and throughout your day would grow. Ask Him to grow the roots of the others alongside you in this group and enable them to reach deep into the things of His heart for them.

Taking It to Him

God, I realize I barely know You. I’m not interested in what I already think I know about You, but I want what You want me to know about You. Give me Your thoughts about You. Your right thinking. Your eyes to see what it is You want me to see. Grant to me the desire of connectedness in You to leave the fleshly thinking...
behind, and dive into the depths of wisdom You are offering me. Who You are is more important than my limited understanding. Grow my perspective of You from Your Word.

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

Meditate on John 15:1-7. Write out the phrases that are highlighted to you from this passage as you do so and turn those particular phrases into prayers.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

56
CHAPTER 13

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:15

“The unsearchable God does invite our searching; friendship is formed in this seeking.” Sara Hagerty

Bare Before Him

We all desire for someone, anyone, to notice the significance of the pain, joy, trial, or suffering we are currently experiencing—even an acknowledgment of the simple, mundane tasks within our day that we perform. Some days we get this “nod” in the form of a little note in the mail or a quick hug accompanied by a “thank you.” At times, this recognition lifts us, but as quickly as a flower fades, so do the feelings from these little accolades.

1. How can you reach toward hearing His “I see you,” His thoughts toward you, in the small and big things in life? Discuss with the group: do you think we will ever mature to the point that we want no other praise than the sound of His voice?

“Unceasing prayer can grow to be something we do, not because of discipline but because of friendship. Desire. It’s where we’re headed, if we will let Him take us there.” Sara Hagerty

2. If we began to see our prayers as conversation with a dear friend, what would you be sharing with Him that you’ve held back thus far in your life?
“We need a new way to journey through the hidden spaces of our lives with an expectation of victory as if we really believe that these unnoticed moments matter.” Sara Hagerty

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
Romans 12:12

3. Sara’s early spring run led her to eight weeks of being sidelined in her routine, her plans, and her expectations. All the self-coaching wasn’t going to create the shift she needed for her circumstances. She needed a new way to endure pain, the journey through her hidden spaces. What does it look like to respond and truly surrender, relinquishing things that matter most to us, in unexpected and sometimes painful circumstances?

Write out Luke 10:42

LINKING ARMS WITH OTHERS

Read together John 3:26-30

He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all.
John 3:31

“Yes, we want to be known. But how often do we consider that God wants to be known too? The unreachable God does invite our searching; friendship is formed in this seeking” Sara Hagerty
More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
Romans 5:11

4. The desperate, needy, and sick crowds sought after Jesus. Most of them we don’t know by name. They came, they saw, they took. But Mary reached toward Him in friendship. When many around Him argued over their position and ministry impact, she came alongside Him and befriended Him—and soon grew to be one who was enraptured, captivated, and wasteful with her love. Mary practiced her lavishness. It wasn’t just one wild brush with Him that she posted for the world to see. Hers was a hidden lifestyle.

After considering Christ’s desire for friendship, His taking notice of every moment and all that He offers you, how do you now frame the unseen life?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

And also, is there a particular area of your life that has been highlighted to you, as you read, where you could ask God to impart His heart to you? One where you could be His friend and carry the things of His heart back to Him in prayer?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.
2 Chronicles 16:9

“God reached into the deepest part of me and said, I see you.” Sara Hagerty

5. Sara experienced a holy moment as her daughter confidently recited the memory verse to the crowd. No one else could have known the fullness of joy in the moment, nor the whole of brokenness within the journey through which they had traveled to that point. We get to do this too. We may not know the whole, unseen story—for no human can fully understand ours—but we can celebrate and call out the richness of
what we see in the lives around us. As you finish this study, alone or with others, take time to share with those in your group (to celebrate!) those moments when you felt Him reaching into the deepest parts of you and affirming you, there. He sees it all and the pause we can give ourselves to see Him, seeing us, forges us deeper into this truth.

______

_________

__________

______

Taking It to Him

Lord, You see the whole of me. You know it all. Before I rise You know my thoughts—the swirl of good and bad. Thank you for desiring my friendship. Knit my heart to Yours. I want to sit at Your feet. I want to waste my best on You because You are worth it and You give back to me more than I can ask or imagine. Show me those pockets throughout the day where I can share my thoughts with You. Help me to not hold anything back, but to reach out to You, knowing You are the prize of my life.

Putting It into Practice

Meditate one last time (for now) on the beauty Mary showed her friend and Savior in Matthew 26:6-13. Write out the parts of this story that are highlighted to you as you read again. Turn a phrase or two from here into your own personal prayer.
For further encouragement, there is an online Facebook group for study leaders and participants called “The Unseen Journey” hosted by study author, Amy Wicks.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/843425172474665/