



# Glory Happening



## 8-Week Reading and Discussion Plan

### Week One

# Creation

#### Prepare

Read the Introduction to the book and Part One and think about how you viewed the idea of "glory" growing up. Has it changed as you have moved into adulthood? In what ways can we redefine what it means to sit in the presence or "glory" of God?

#### Discuss

Which story/stories stood out to you in Part One of the book? How can we view creation differently, or think about the ways we ourselves are being re-created daily?

In STORY 6 I write about hanging prayer flags outside my home as a reminder of blessing. How can we practice blessing by engaging other cultures and by remembering that we are called to bless our homes and one another?

STORY 5 describes a time that I made loaves of bread with my children. Whether or not you are a stay-at-home or work-from-home parent, whether or not you even have kids, how can you remember that even baking bread is a kind of glory, a sacred action in which to participate? What people in your life practice this kind of living and appreciating life?

#### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

Jesus,  
We go through life assuming that you journey  
with us  
only at certain points, that only specific  
moments catch your eye.  
But in truth, you journey with us everywhere  
and through everything.  
You are there in the beginning,  
and you are with us through every new  
experience,  
in every space we inhabit,  
every season that calls us to ourselves  
and to the people around us.  
You journey with us because your  
goodness is constant,  
and in that goodness we are,  
of course,  
never alone.  
Hallelujah  
that you have always been  
a journeyman.  
Hallelujah  
that you do not abandon the  
task.  
Amen.



## Week Two

# Light

### Prepare

Read Part Two of the book, *Light*, thinking about your own life stories. How has light and darkness been a part of your story, maybe in ways that you didn't expect, or using language that you've never used before?

### Discuss

STORY 9 is about coming to the realization that I am a mystic, someone who has moved to an "inner experience" with God. Mystics are everyday people just like us. Would you consider yourself a mystic? How do you practice an inwardly sacred life?

STORY 13 is a story from fourth grade, when I took refuge in my classroom the year my parents divorced, as the room was slowly being turned into a cave for a class project. Think back on your childhood. Where did you find light? Who were the people that showed you kindness and sacred love when you least expected it? How can we do the same for others who are hurting?

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

*Jesus, give us yourself.*

*Give us your glory, the Kingdom promised in your blood and sweat.*

*Don't leave us alone and lonely, afraid and beguiled.*

*Gather yourself into the corners of our homes, into the spaces we inhabit every day, in the storybook reading and the journal writing, into the creating and processing and remembering, the journeying.*

*Redeem us, restore us, make our blood run clean in our veins, so that we may remember how good it is to be together.*

*Glory and Hallelujah, we wait for you. Amen.*



## Week Three

# Weight

### Prepare

Read the stories in Part Three of the book, and consider the heaviness of the presence of God in our lives at times. Sometimes glory happens upon us in our wilderness experiences or in our pain. Still, it is the glory of God, just as Ezekiel described it.

### Discuss

Share a time in your life when you felt like the presence or Mystery of God sat with you in grief, loneliness, or doubt. Why was that important? Who else sat with you in those spaces?

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In STORY 17, *Transfusion*, I begin with this quote by Richard Rohr: *Like any true mirror, the gaze of God receives us exactly as we are without judgment or distortion, subtraction or addition. Such perfect receiving is what transforms us.* How, in the midst of heaviness, can we truly enter into the presence of God? What is it about transformation that happens through our pain, and why do we try to avoid it so often?

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

*Jesus,  
Thank you for the way you pour yourself into  
humanity,  
straight into our bones,  
into the marrow,  
where we've tried to poison ourselves with  
grief.*

*You are all joy,  
all wonder,  
and all relief.*

*Jesus, thank you for the loud and the quiet,  
the laughter and the sobs—  
it all means that we are alive,  
that your reality finds us.  
And to be human is to know every limit,  
to see ourselves stacked against those realities,  
against every hard truth.  
To be human is to be able to grasp hope,  
to hold it tightly to the chest,  
to let its nectar seep into our hearts  
and give us peace.*

*Yes.*

*Thank you for our humanity.*

*Amen.*

## Week Four

# Voice

### Prepare

Read the stories from Part Four, *Voice*, thinking about what it means to hear the voice of God. In the Old Testament, Moses heard it come from a burning bush, a mystical experience if ever there was one. When have you heard the voice of God, and where did it come from?

### Discuss

Let's talk about Chapter 21, *The Story People*. I describe a time when a number of us gathered for an overnight storytelling event, an extended small-group time, taking turns sharing our stories with one another. You can imagine how powerful and even overwhelming this was for us, but it was an experience I will never forget. In the church, we've lost a lot of our sense of personal experience or storytelling, and I think we miss a lot without it. Take this time to share your stories with one another. Take the time to tell everyone in your group 1 or 2 events that have changed your life, moments when you either needed the voice of God and it wasn't there, or when it showed up and you least expected it. Talk about the beauty of story together and how it calls us into community, how we hear the voice of God in the voices (and stories) of one another.

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

*Holy Spirit,  
We are so thankful that you are  
a world without end.  
We see things so presently, so daily,  
so small and abrupt.  
But your sight stretches,  
your goodness covers us,  
covers our world.  
Give us new eyes,  
new hearts to see Kingdom things,  
to take in Kingdom stories  
and claim them as our own,  
because they belong to our humanness.  
May we stretch ourselves,  
not into unneeded brokenness,  
but into you,  
where unspoken words are heard,  
where wounds are healed,  
where we find that  
we are part of eternal things,  
even here on earth.  
Hallelujah that you invite us in.  
Amen.*

## Week Five

# Fire

### Prepare

Read Part Five of the book and think about the unexpectedness of Mystery as it has invaded your life. Where were you when it happened? What were you doing? How does the Mystery of God remind you of a kind of fire?

### Discuss

STORY 29 is about going to a Glen Hansard concert with my husband, a place that, for many, represents how we find God in different art forms. Art invades our spaces, our minds, our hearts in ways we least expect. When has this happened to you? How does art show you glory?

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Sometimes glory comes as fire—it's there and then it's gone. These experiences often surprise us, and then leave us wanting so much more of the experience of knowing God and the Mystery of the Spirit. How do we live with that tension of thirsting for more while being content with what we have in the meantime? Is this difficult for you?

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

*God,  
If there is some mysterious order of things that  
holds the world together,  
we don't really know about it.  
What we know is what we see and feel and  
touch,  
what we partake of with the senses.  
We know how to feed each other,  
we take in beauty,  
we share moments with created things,  
to remember that we are tethered to each  
other  
for a greater and deeper good,  
for a true and lasting holiness.  
This seems to be Kingdom as best we can  
understand it.  
This seems to be Kingdom where Kingdom can  
be  
understood in tiny bits and pieces,  
tiny things that keep us longing for more of  
you.  
Amen.*



### Week Six

# Honor

### Prepare

Read Part Six of the book, and think about how your culture views honor, and what that means especially for Christians. Consider the verse that goes along with this section from Romans: Let love be genuine . . . outdo one another in showing honor.

### Discuss

We often think of honor as chivalry (honor, courage, a sense of justice), and put this kind of chivalrous idea onto the character of God. Is it fitting? If God is a God of honor and courage, with a sense of justice, how do we practice showing honor—or chivalry—to one another, and how does that create glory in our lives?

In my tribe's culture, we believe that dreams come as a way of remembering and honoring our ancestors and our memories. In STORY 34, I describe a dream I had about my Grandma, who'd passed away when I was teenager. Have you had similar dreams, or memories that come to mind of those who have gone before you? What does it mean to honor them with your own faith, to find glory in the way they lived their lives? What parts of Scripture come to mind when you think about ancestry and dreams?

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

O God,  
Once a long time ago,  
when there was only dirt and grass  
and open spaces all over, neighbors were still  
finding each other.  
People were still gathering together on the  
grass  
and spreading out their animal skins  
and making plans together  
under the spread of your sky.  
Then one day,  
we punctured that ground with  
tent stakes and held our spaces together  
with mud, because we needed shelter,  
a way to build something together.  
And later, when buildings  
popped up here and there and the dirt became  
stone foundations, we found ourselves  
huddled on neighborhood blocks and across  
cities,  
up and down on apartment floors.  
But in all of it, we were searching for  
each other, and for life with you.  
We were searching the grass,  
searching our floors, searching the sky,  
for a sign that we were never  
meant to be alone.  
And indeed,  
you have always given us one another.  
Hallelujah and Amen.

## Week Seven

# Worship

### Prepare

As you read Part Seven, try to expand your idea of worship to outside of the church, even outside of your church community, if you have one. Think of worship as wonder, as relationship, as exploration in our created world.

### Discuss

First, let's talk about STORY 39, *A Church for the Children*. What will community look like for our kids down the road, and how can we prepare them for authentic, vulnerable relationships that foster glory? I say in this chapter, "The Kingdom is not bound by brick walls, not hemmed in by any denomination's guidelines. It doesn't exist only when the bells are tolling the church hour." How can we relay this message in our lives to our children and our community?

Now let's turn the idea of worship as we step into nature. STORY 41 is about my husband's love for rock climbing, the way he finds God—glory—when he is hiking, communing with this created world that we are called to care for and enjoy. Where do you find glory outside? What lessons do you learn from morning walks or occasional hikes? How do adventure, wilderness, and worship go together?

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

*Jesus,  
In the specks of light that hover  
in your presence,  
something pulls us all together.  
In the specks of light that give hope  
to our spaces  
and remind us that we  
are loved,  
we see your face  
in the face of our friends.  
We see your breath  
in our breath,  
your face  
in each other's faces,  
feel your calloused  
hands in the hands  
of every encounter.*

*And so,  
in some never-understood way,  
we invade your space  
and you invade ours,  
a Venn diagram  
where we are enclosed  
in all that you are,  
and you are in all of us as well.  
Hallelujah and Amen.*



## Week Eight

# Kingdom

### Prepare

In this last week together, we're focusing on the *Kingdom*. If you can, as you read the stories from Part Eight, think about how the "Kingdom" of God is something altogether Mystery to us, as much as we are also a part of it right now. Being present to that reality tethers us to glory.

### Discuss

Let's discuss this Annie Dillard quote from STORY 47, *The Fountain*: "Catch it if you can. The present is an invisible electron; its lightning path traced faintly on a blackened screen is fleet, and fleeing, and gone." Sit with this a moment. How can we be more present to the moment, with ourselves and with each other? The story is about a water fountain at a park in our city, and the incredible picture of Kingdom that happens when people, especially children, gather and experience pure joy as a community. Have you experienced this?

In the very last story of the book, *In the Meantime*, I describe something my husband and I do together every now and then—take out a piece of paper or a journal and write down all the ways God has been present to us, or we've seen *glory in our midst*. For this last week, I'd like you to get a piece of paper and a pen and do the same. You can go back a week, a few months, or a few years, but write down or draw out your timeline. *Remember*. Share some of these experiences with one another.

### Pray

begin with 10 seconds of silence

*Mystery of everything that we understand  
and most certainly of everything that we don't,  
teach us to rest in this unknowing.  
Teach us to rest in each other,  
to rest in the presence of a stranger,  
in the kindness that is always unexpected,  
that surprises us,  
that gives us a taste of you,  
as much as we can bear to understand.  
You are the Creation,  
you are the Light,  
you are the Weight,  
you are the Voice.  
You hold Fire,  
you give Honor,  
you gift Worship,  
and you are Kingdom,  
yesterday,  
today,  
tomorrow.  
Hallelujah,  
for all the glory.  
Amen.*