



Additional Questions for the *Love Does* Study Guide

A Six-Week Study Program:

Week 1 – read the Forward, Introduction, and chapters 1-4

Week 2 – read chapters 5-9

Week 3 – read chapters 10-14

Week 4 – read chapters 15-20

Week 5 – read chapters 21-26

Week 6 – read chapters 27-31 and the epilogue

Advice to hosts

After reading each chapter, engage your small group as follows with discussion after each step:

1. Read chapter title
2. Read chapter subtitle
3. Offer an opening question
4. Have a member of the group read the passage
5. Offer the second question
6. Have a member of the group read the next passage

Having members of the group read aloud a passage won't seem repetitious. Kind of like a "Lectio Divina" approach of multiple readings. The members of the group will each get something different from the passage after reading it and then hearing it read.

As the host, read the chapter in advance of the session and mark in the book the "Read on ..." sections so they are easy to find during the session. Also read the additional questions for each chapter.

This guide references page numbers in the printed copy of the book.

Week 1:

INTRODUCTION: LOVE DOES

"I used to think I needed an office to be a lawyer, but now I know all I need is an island."

Where do you do your best thinking?

How do you feel about owning your faith?

Read on page xiii, the paragraph "Living a life fully engaged ..."

What do you think of whimsy?

How do you feel about whimsy?

Read on page xiii, the bottom of the page paragraph, "Somewhere in each of us, I believe ..."

How do you feel about there being *someone else*."

CHAPTER 1: I'M WITH YOU - Matthew 28:16-20

"I used to want to fix people, but now I just want to be with them."

How do we reconcile the seeming conflict between "just being" and not striving to "fix" with a calling to *do*?

We are studying this active, mobile, intentional way of living/loving. Can this type of love also be still? Quiet? Simply present?

Is there a time when someone has been "with you," as Randy was for Bob? What difference did it make in your life?

What's the difference between treating someone as a project and treating them as a friend? In your experience, how might the line get blurred?

Are there times when you have loved with presence and sacrifice? What was the outcome?

Bob describes "a love that operates more like a sign language than being spoken outright." What kind of sign language might you be most fluent in? How do you show love in your life right now?

Think about Jesus' role as "Immanuel—God with us." How has he been "with you" so far, either in your life or in the life of someone you know?

Under what circumstances would you drop what you are doing and join a person on their adventure? Explain.

Read page 8, the paragraph, “What I learned from Randy changed ...” to the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER 2: SNIPER FIRE - Romans 12:1-2

“I used to think I had to act a certain way to follow God, but now I know God doesn’t want us to be typical.”

Consider the ways that, if we’re not careful and without God’s help, we’ll be conformed to the patterns of this world. David Foster Wallace famously mentioned in his Kenyon College Commencement speech a parable about two young fish swimming along until they meet an older fish. The older fish nods to them and says, “Morning, boys, how’s the water?” After they swim for a minute one looks over to the other and says, “What the [heck] is water?” We get so accustomed to our lives, habits, and patterns that we eliminate a chance for God to break in and heal and transform us. Walk through your day and week and consider all of the things that you take for granted and ask God what renewal and transformation might look like.

Is being atypical an invitation or a calling? In what ways was Jesus atypical? In what ways was he typical?

How is God inviting you into “a life that’s moving away from typical”? Have there been any clues so far?

Everyone has a sneaking suspicion that they’re a little bit weird—a little bit atypical. How do you react to those suspicions in yourself? What are the quirks God gave you?

What are the pros and cons of being typical? How do you know if something’s coming from a genuine place, or one of conformity?

What’s an example of someone you’ve witnessed being 100% themselves? What about being themselves and following God at the same time? How did that affect those around them?

Bob says, “There’s nothing wrong with being typical, I guess, but there is nothing fundamentally right about it either.” Discuss the notion of conformity having become “right” in Christianity. How do you think Christians got that reputation? Do you believe that is changing?

Read on page 12, the paragraph, “I liked how Doug did life ...”

Read on page 14, at the top, “At times I’m struck ...”

How do you feel about being typical?

Read on page 16, “Doug and I are still ...”

CHAPTER 3: RYAN IN LOVE – John 3:1-3

“I used to think being loved was the greatest thing to think about, but now I know love is never satisfied just thinking about it.”

Meditate on the great love of God that makes us his children even when we treat him like an enemy. Consider the ways God has wooed us (creation, forgiveness, beauty, friendship, grace) and the response such things warrant from a child to his/her Father.

What are some things you believe God planned in advance to “wow” you? To show His love specifically for and to you? Are you looking at life/people/creation/circumstances through this lens? Do you feel that you are loved with “a love that never grows tired or is completely finished finding ways to fully express itself”? What would change if you were loved like that?

How does Ryan exemplify the concept of “audacious love”? How did Bob audaciously love him back?

What do you think it was about Ryan that made Bob agree to do all those extreme things to help him? What was it about Bob that made him willing to cross the line?

Bob says, “Being ‘engaged’ isn’t just an event that happens when a guy gets on one knee...being engaged is a way of doing life, a way of living and loving.” How are you engaged at this time in your life?

If we are the beloved of Jesus, and He keeps expressing his love for us through the world around us, how and where do you feel it most?

What occasion in your life led you to actively pursue a love interest?

What steps of preparation did you take before you proposed to your spouse?

How did you propose to your spouse?

Read on page 24, “Ryan’s love was audacious. ...” to the end of the chapter. Discuss.

CHAPTER 4: THE REACH – Luke 15

“I used to be afraid of failing at something that really mattered to me, but now I’m more afraid of succeeding at things that don’t matter.”

The gospel could be succinctly put: “God finds us.” Consider how, like the lost sheep, coin, or son, you’re “prone to wander” but more importantly the lengths Jesus goes, even to death, to find you. Consider the Father’s joy upon your return and the fanfare he’s planned.

Put yourself in the shoes of each character in the story of the “lost son.” What does it feel like and when have you felt like: The lost son? The older brother? The father?

What failure in your life are you most grateful for? Why?

Have you ever had a fantastically spectacular failure like Bob’s? What did it do to you?

Bob says, “The thing I love about God is He intentionally guides people into failure.” Have you felt this in your life? How?

Are you benefiting from a failure right now, from either recent times or the past?

What major “screw up story for the ages” do you have?

Do you agree that “you’ve been nothing until you’ve been fired once or twice”?

Read on page 29, “The thing I love ... patient.” Discuss.

Read on page 29, “I love those passages ... screw-ups.” Discuss.

Read on page 29, “I found another job ... matter” to the end. Discuss.

WEEK 2

CHAPTER 5: THE REARVIEW MIRROR – Exodus 32

“I used to think I could shape the circumstances around me, but now I know Jesus uses circumstances to shape me.”

Our expectations have the ability to breed idols, false ideas about what should be and how. They make us impatient, and tempt us to control the situation. We’re often frustrated when these things we construct fail us. As Moses went to meet with God on the mountain, the people he was leading were making their own gods at the base of the mountain. When have you been frustrated, disappointed, impatient, or controlling in a situation? When have your expectations later been revealed to be “idols” or “fakes”?

In what ways do you find yourself trying to shape your circumstances? Do you plan to do it? Why do you think you do that?

What do you find yourself wanting most at this point in your life? Why is it so important to you, and how did it get that way? Could it be blocking your view of God in some way?

Bob says, “When we want something that bad, it’s easy to mistake what we truly need for the thing we *really* want.” How is this true for us culturally? What idols or golden calves are standing in for real needs? When, in your experience, has God known what you needed better than you have?

What “Dear Bob”-type letters have left creases in you? Could they be forming something new?

When, if ever, have you been dumped by a friend? How did you handle it?

How did you discover what your means to earn a living would be?

Read page 35, “I’ve learned that God ...” Discuss.

How have you put a disappointment in your “rearview mirror”?

When has what God intended for you been hidden?

Read page 37, “And when each of us ...” to the end. Discuss—what is human origami?

CHAPTER 6: GO BUY YOUR BOOKS – Romans 8:28-30

“I used to think God guided us by opening and closing doors, but now I know sometimes God wants us to kick some doors down.”

So many times in the Bible the Lord calls ordinary people and equips them for extraordinary purposes. What is your favorite story in the Bible of someone who was surprised by their calling: Noah? Abraham? Sarah? Moses? David? Jonah? Mary? Matthew? Zacchaeus? The rich young ruler? Peter? Lydia? Paul?

How have you experienced the power of the right words being said to you?

Bob says, “Ordinary people like you and me can launch each other.” Have you ever launched someone else, or witnessed it?

How do you know when to wait on God vs. when you are “over-spiritualizing” a decision that God just wants you to make? Is there such a thing as “over-spiritualization”?

Bob wonders “if we can launch people better than a dean [or someone with a lot of power] because we’re ordinary.” Why would this be? What are some things that stop us from launching people?

When has there been a time in your life when “words can change everything”?

Read page 42, “I have a lot of time ... by the right people.” Discuss—what is faith?

When, if ever, has there been a time in your life when you felt that God wanted you to kick some doors down?

Read page 44-45, “I once heard somebody ... say them.” Discuss.

CHAPTER 7: SWEET MARIA – Matthew 26:6-13

“I used to think Jesus motivated us with ultimatums, but now I know He pursues us in love.”

Imagine yourself reclining at the table with Jesus when a disheveled woman bursts in and not only makes a mess but, for all intents and purposes, wastes thousands of dollars on a one-time show of affection. Some of Jesus’ friends were scandalized because they thought that there were far better ways to mobilize those resources to help people. What would your reaction be? Why was such an apparent waste so treasured by Jesus?

Have you ever felt love that was like “an energy that has to be dissipated”? If so, what did it lead you to do? Is “dissipating” always appropriate? Is it ever selfish? Untimely? Wrong?

What costs have you or those close to you paid for love? What was the pay-off?

Have you experienced God convincing you to love Him back? How does He do this?

What makes you stop and stare in amazement? How might that be God pursuing you?

Read page 47, “If Jesus has taught me ... know you back.” Have you ever been infatuated with someone? How did it work out?

Read page 52, “But the reason I wanted ... costs everything.”

How have you encountered the love of God? How have you experienced Jesus’ love?

CHAPTER 8: WEDDING CAKE – Philippians 3:1-12

“I used to think being a believer was enough, but now I know Jesus wants us to participate, no matter what condition we’re in.”

Our greatest obstacles to faith and faithfulness can sometimes be the places we feel most secure. Our greatest brokenness can sometimes be the places where we’ve most assumed that we’re whole and strong. Paul gives the Philippians his list of credentials before considering them garbage. His gains are in fact his losses when his vision is corrected in light of Christ. What are some of the things you’re most proud of? In what way might some of these strengths, traits

or possessions actually be obstacles, defense mechanisms or weaknesses? In what ways are you weaker than you normally let on?

How would you describe your “spiritual condition” at this moment? Are you healthy? Thriving? Surviving? Sick? Terminally ill?

What kind of grit tends to keep us from allowing ourselves to be “served up” to others?

For a lot of people, serving a wedding cake with rocks in it (or allowing ourselves to be used when we’re broken) is something we just can’t get behind. But what are some ways God could use your specific brokenness?

How is Jesus’ logic different from our logic, or from the logic of the world?

Bob says, “The only thing Jesus said He couldn’t serve up were people who were full of themselves or believed the lie that they were who they used to be before they met Him.” What keeps them from being served? Do you fall into either of these categories?

When have you felt being a believer was enough?

Read page 57, “The only thing ... Him.”

How did Jesus speak to you?

What signs did Jesus give you?

When have you felt called by God?

Read page 58, “He called people ... all.” to the end. Discuss.

CHAPTER 9: JUST SAY YES – Exodus 3

“I used to think you had to be special for God to use you, but now I know you simply need to say yes.”

Notice in the story of Moses’ calling, first Moses’ assent: “Here I Am,” and then the ways that he makes excuses and backs down. What are some of the things God called Moses to?

Why do you think Moses started to back down? What caused him to be self-conscious? Can you think of a time in your own life when your own *God-consciousness* gave way to *self-consciousness*?

Has God ever asked you or someone you know to do something completely inexplicable?
How'd it go?

Can you think of a time you've said yes, no, or ignored a call from God? How do those times give you insight into God's plan and character?

When in your life have you just said, "Yes!"?

Read page 64, "I think God ... come and see."

Are you facing a request from God or a decision that you don't understand? Do you want to share it with us?

Read page 65, "Maybe God is doing ... wrong person." Discuss.

Read page 65, "And if you think about it, least like people to do it."

Week 3

CHAPTER 10: THE INTERVIEWS – Matthew 5:43-48

"I used to think I had to be somebody important to accomplish things, but now I know Jesus uses ordinary people more."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenges his listeners to love their enemies, not just their friends. What do you think he means in verse 45: "that you may be children of your Father in heaven." How are these two things related?

Practically, how are we to love our enemies? When have you been loved by someone who you would consider your enemy?

If Bob's kids showed up in your office and asked what you were hoping for, what would you tell them?

Why do you think the leaders opened up to the kids?

How can we relate to each other more on this kid-level?

What are the risks and rewards inherent in opening our lives and homes to one another? Does one outweigh the other?

Bob says, “There’s a big difference between being pen pals and being real pals... Friends *do*—they don’t just think about it.” Can you think of a time in your friendships when you experienced the shift from pen pal to real pal? How can that magic be recreated?

What was it like making friends in school?

Read page 71, “What would happen ... two countries.” Discuss friendship.

What have you experienced with the people you met in foreign countries?

Read page 73, “You know ... a friend *does*.”

Read page 74-75, “Something happens ... wise beyond its years.” Discuss.

CHAPTER 11: THERE’S MORE ROOM – Luke 14:15-24

“I used to think I needed an invitation to get into most places, but now I know I’m already invited.”

If this banquet parable were written now, what would be some of the excuses you’d most likely use to avoid the invitation?

What might it mean or look like to be people obsessed with accepting and offering invitations to the “poor, crippled, blind, and lame”?

If “life is like a sweepstakes where you must be present to win,” what does *present* look like to you? How does one become fully engaged with Jesus?

Has “the Christian life” ever felt like the set of *National Treasure 2* to you? Or have you ever felt like an outsider? What might Jesus do about this?

Discuss a time when you received a surprise invitation you were glad you took. What about one you regret rejecting?

Is “there more room” in your church? In your life? How can more space be made for those Jesus would have included?

Have you ever experienced the disappearance of an obstacle after accepting an invitation from God? If so, how can that spur you on?

When have you felt called by God?

Read page 79, "I've always wanted my kids ... There's nothing like feeling included." Discuss feeling included.

Read page 80, "There is only one invitation ... fully live." Discuss.

Read page 79, "Turning down ... every day, all over again." Discuss.

Read page 81, "I don't think God ... for us." Discuss.

Read page 83, "Jesus wants us ... 'There's more room.'" Discuss.

CHAPTER 12: WOW WHAT A HIT – Peter 2:1-10

"I used to think the words spoken about us describe who we are, but now I know they shape who we are."

What does it do to your outlook or ego to be called "chosen," "royal," "priest," "God's own"? Does that change the way you look at the mundane parts of everyday life? Is it important that all these things aren't solo, but plural?

Recall some words of encouragement that really stuck with you. How did they change you?

Do you really believe you are the apple of God's eye? What evidence is there for this?

Bob describes his coach "telling me I was a real ball player—he saw it in me and was just calling it out." List some opportunities you can make to do this for people in your life.

What's the relationship between God's encouragement and our humility? How does one inform the other?

Recall a time someone encouraged you despite (or even because of) your shortcomings—calling out something that may not have been there yet. Did their predictions come to pass?

When in your life has an encouraging word stuck with you and changed your outlook?

Read page 87, "I heard a self-help guy ... that we aren't." Discuss.

What ways have you found to encourage positive self-talk?

Read page 88, "Words of encouragement are like that ... ability to shape life." Discuss.

CHAPTER 13: BIGGER AND BETTER – Matthew 13:44-45

“I used to think I needed to sacrifice for God, but now I know faith is like a game of Bigger and Better.”

In a spree of parables found in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus mentions the field with a treasure in it, that when stumbled upon is worth selling everything for. Does this parable strike you as odd? Borderline unethical? How does the man’s attitude relate to not only the worth but also the excitement with which we’re to approach God and his kingdom?

Bob draws a connection between the dime in the Bigger and Better game and our pride and self-preservation. What’s an example of a dime you’re holding on to rather than trading up?

What specifically keeps you holding on to that dime in your life?

What’s the difference between sacrificing something for God and trading up for Him?

Bob says, “When we get our security from Christ, we no longer have to look for it in the world, and that’s a pretty good trade.” How have you experienced this? How would you like to?

What in your life tends to make you think you “matter” in the eyes of the world? What might it be like to give it up to God?

When did you feel you had given up something big in your life? Did you get something bigger and better in return?

Read page 91, “We’ve all given up something at one ... make that trade?” Discuss.

What does it mean to you to give up yourself to know God better?

Read page 92, “Actually, the real game ... give love.”

What does a life with God mean to you?

Read page 93, “Religious people say ... on to.”

CHAPTER 14: A NEW KIND OF DIET – Acts 19:11-20

I used to think religion tasted horrible, but now I know I was just eating the fake stuff.

The story about Sceva’s sons is high drama. Filled with irony, the evil spirit knows exactly the ruse that these men are perpetrating even though everyone else is clueless. Even the best of Christians are sometimes tempted to present themselves as A+ religious people at the expense

of sincerity and authenticity, for various reasons. In what way are you tempted? How might your authenticity in that hard area be a gift to others?

What are the major “head-fakes” that you’ve encountered when talking to people who have rejected religion? How have these things tainted religion for them?

If you’re still in contact with those people, what’s a good way to lovingly show them the real thing?

Is something about faith or religion faking you out? Or has it in the past? How did you discover it, and what did you do?

What fake thing angers you the most? “Lite” cream cheese? Fake leather? Fake sympathy? How might you be called to combat it?

List the ways we often think religion tastes horrible.

Read page 97, “You can usually tell when someone ... about them.”

What part of Methodism do you find distasteful?

Have you ever felt this church was making excuses for its beliefs and practices?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Week 4

CHAPTER 15: A WORD NOT TO USE – Ephesians 2:1-10

I used to think words were all the same, but now I know there are some words I shouldn't use.

Paul tells the church at Ephesus that they are God’s handiwork, the Greek word “*poema*,” meaning something like a poem, a masterpiece. Consider the mystery of being conformed (re-formed!) to the image of God, while at the same time remaining so uniquely you. Consider what it might mean for God, by his Spirit, to be not only a good and wise Author, but also good and wise Editor. He sharpens us, gives us direction, and enriches us, while making our words undeniably ours.

What are some examples of Christian “spin” you’ve encountered? What could be the antidote?

How do you think the church may have gotten to the point where it sometimes “presents God’s plan like a prospectus promising a return on investment”? What’s the real need?

Pinpoint a couple of words in your faith language that are in danger of losing their power. What are some alternatives? (Thesauruses encouraged.)

Discuss the line between making an effort to keep things fresh and authentic and selling ourselves out to appear cool or desirable. What is our responsibility and what isn't?

Bob says God "doesn't spell out everything for us in life, but He does tell us how we can write our lives better; and trusting Him implicitly is always the right place to start." In what way might God be asking you to trust him?

When have you felt "at a loss for words"?

Read page 101, "What I like about Jesus ... just Jesus."

When have you put your trust in God?

Read page 102, "There are hundreds of words ... same way."

CHAPTER 16: HUNTING GRIZZLIES – Romans 3:21-28

I used to think I had missed the mark and God was mad about it, but now I know "missing the mark" is a stupid analogy.

How do you think about sin? Read Romans 3:21-28 in a more conventional translation and then read it in the Message paraphrase. Perhaps rather than focusing on us "missing the mark" as the shooters, as if God had a target and we didn't have a powerful or accurate enough bow or gun, what if we were the arrow, moving further astray with no hope of getting back on track? That we "compiled this long and sorry record as and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us," but then "God did it for us!"

Regardless of your feelings on guns, what personal lessons can we learn from these two pieces of shooting advice?

- "You need to look through the scope at the things that are far away, but you also need to take your eye away long enough to see what's close."
- "It's all about how you pull the trigger ... If you pull hard, it will jerk the gun off target. So you need to pull the trigger super slow."

What's the best approach to take when we see people messing up? What about when we mess up?

When have you felt you "missed the mark"?

Read page 107, “I didn’t like that, because ... I sure do.” Discuss.

When have you felt like you were in someone’s cross hairs?

Read page 108, “Sometimes, though, things ... get healed.”

CHAPTER 17: CORNER STORE ECONOMICS – Mark 12:41-44

I used to think rules were made by someone else, but now I know we get to make some of our own.

Why do you think Jesus valued the widow’s meager contribution so much?

How have you witnessed grace like the storekeeper showed Bob as a child?

When have you come up short and been shown generosity? Or shown it to others?

How has Jesus’ “reverse economy” of giving and receiving played out in your life?

List a few people you could be the shopkeeper for. How can you add value to their pennies this week?

CHAPTER 18: CATCHING A RIDE – Matthew 4:1-11

I used to think life could be shared with anyone, but now I know choosing the right people is pretty important.

What are the three main “temptations” that the devil throws at Jesus? Why do you think he thought these three were particularly enticing?

When have you had to bail out of a “creepy-van” situation or relationship? What was the turning point that made you realize it was time to go?

Discuss the relationship between showing grace to people and limiting your involvement with those who get creepy. How might Jesus handle this?

What are some good ways to “ask people where they are going before you get in with them”? In your professional life? In personal relationships?

What do you think of Bob’s statement, “You become like the people you hang around, and to a great degree, you end up going wherever they’re headed”? Has this been true in your experience?

CHAPTER 19: JEEPOLOGY – 2 Corinthians 7:12-16

I used to think the best teachers wore tweed jackets and smoked pipes, but now I know they flip over and leak.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he gushes with pride that the Corinthians are so dependable. How have you experienced the Church to be a dependable/faithful/trustworthy mirror of the dependable/faithful/trustworthy God we follow? When have you experienced the exact opposite?

Is there something you keep apologizing to God for, as Lynn kept apologizing to Bob? Why?

Everybody struggles with the fear of becoming dependent on others. Where can you stand to rely on others more?

How might your life be different if you consciously sought to be less independent?

Bob describes wanting to "leak Jesus" after having his life flipped upside down by Him. How does this play out for people you've known? For you?

CHAPTER 20: TEN-YEAR-OLD ADVENTURES – Matthew 4:18-22

I used to think knowing God was like going on a business trip with Him, but now I know He's inviting me on an adventure instead.

What do you think the disciples heard and felt when Jesus told them to leave their nets and follow him on the adventures of being "fishers of men"?

What is "the difference between an adventure and a program"? How might some of the programs in your life be turned into adventures?

Bob says, "God asks what it is He's made us to love, what it is that captures our attention, what feeds that deep indescribable need of our souls to experience the richness of the world He made. And then, leaning over us, He whispers, 'Let's go do *that* together.'" Does that evoke anything for you? What has He made you to love?

When have you crashed and burned in a spectacularly awesome way? How is that part of your adventure?

What kinds of fears most keep you from engagement? Fear of getting hurt? Lost? Stranded? Why?

Bob describes faith in Jesus as “an invitation without a lot of details.” How has your faith defied expectations or surprised you so far?

Week 5:

CHAPTER 21: HEARING AID – 1 Kings 19:9-18

I used to think God wouldn't talk to me, but now I know I'm just selective with what I choose to hear.

When have you listened for God in the roar, the earthquake, or the fire in your own life to miss his gentle whisper?

What if God's voice is more like *white noise*, a call that is always there, you just have to remove all of the noise that overpowers it? What might you have to eliminate in order to hear Him?

Bob lists some of the ways a person might hear from God: “Through flowers, other people, an uncomfortable sense, a feeling of joy, goosebumps, a newfound talent, or an appreciation we acquire over time.” When do you feel you are hearing from God? And what happens when your internal tuning fork goes off?

If God's plan for us is based on our hardwired loves and passions, and His character, what clues has He given you about what direction to go in?

What are the major things you can “triangulate off of” to see which direction God is going?

If *we* are God's plan for the whole world, how might that play out for you and the people you're on this trip with?

Name a specific time God has spoken to you through another person. What did they say and did it change you?

CHAPTER 22: THE PUPPETEER – Luke 24:36-49

I used to be afraid that if I was authentic I might take a hit, but now I know that being real means I will take a hit.

For all the reasons that the risen Jesus' appearance to his disciples is remarkable, perhaps one of the most overlooked are his nail scars. Sure they prove that he is who he says he is and went through the awful death they all mourned. But it also tells us a little something about resurrection; about perfected, immortal bodies. Have you ever considered that our resurrected, immortal bodies will still show signs of the struggle and pain of this life? Isn't it odd that these

scars are somehow beautiful markers of who Jesus is, transfigured in the light of God's Spirit raising Christ from the dead? What scars do you hope God will make into badges of his faithfulness?

It seems to be human nature to protect ourselves by putting out a fake version of our priceless originals, in case of damage. What elements of your fake self are different from your real self?

When have you taken a hit for being the real you? How did it affect you?

When have you felt loved and accepted for being the real you? What does that show us about God's love?

Our culture presents many ways to concoct a convincing fake version of ourselves—social media, image management, self-marketing, appearance obsession, etc. What can we do to supplant these things and be more vulnerable as our true selves?

How can a fake be spotted? In what loving ways can we encourage people to bring out their own priceless originals?

CHAPTER 23: FRIENDS, WELCOME HOME

I used to think following God required a lot of navigation, but now I know all I need is a line and a circle.

How can we get to know God?

Bob says, "I find Jesus, keep pointing toward Him, and stay somewhere in that circle." Describe what you think he means.

Related Bible verse:

"You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed." Psalm 139:16

What words do you want written about you?

CHAPTER 24: LOSE THE CAPE

I used to think I should talk about everything, but now I know it's better to keep some things a secret.

Why would Jesus want the people He helped to tell no one?

Related Bible verses:

"Then he touched their eyes and said, 'Because of your faith, it will happen.' Then their eyes were opened, and they could see! Jesus sternly warned them, 'Don't tell anyone about this.'" Matthew 9:29-30

What kind of secretly awesome things has God done for you?

If you had the opportunity to do what God wanted you to do without a lot of fanfare, what would it be?

CHAPTER 25: GOD IS GOOD

I used to think God was good some of the time, but now I know He's good all the time.

What failures have you experienced? Have you ever celebrated the failure? Why or why not?

What kinds of goodness from God do you notice in Don's story?

Related Bible verse:

"How kind the LORD is! How good he is! So merciful, this God of ours!" Psalm 116:5

When have you witnessed God's goodness in your life?

CHAPTER 26: JAILBREAK

I used to think there were some prisons you couldn't escape, but now I know there's no place I can go where God can't rescue us.

Consider the different types of prisons we find ourselves trapped inside. What ones seem inescapable?

In what way is unforgiveness like a prison? Have you ever refused to forgive someone?

Related Bible verses:

"I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD." Psalm 40:1-3

What kind of pit or prison have you fallen into? How can God help you? Will you seek His help?

Week 6:

CHAPTER 27: THE STORY

I used to think I needed to record stories, but now I know I just need to engage them.

Describe faith in your own words.

Related Bible verse:

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” 1 Peter 3:15

If someone asked you to share the reason for the hope you have, what would be your story?

CHAPTER 28: SKIN IN THE GAME

I used to think I needed to pick sides, but now I know it’s better to pick a fight.

What kind of disputes or fights have you been a part of?

Related Bible verses:

“A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.’” Luke 22: 24-26

What surprises you most from Jesus’ statement?

Being strong and courage for God are different than what we might assume. How can you be strong and courageous the way God wants?

CHAPTER 29: MEMORIZING JESUS

I used to think I could learn about Jesus by studying Him, but now I know Jesus doesn’t want stalkers.

What’s the difference between knowing “about” someone and really knowing them?

Related Bible verse:

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”
James 1:22*

How can we stop being Bible study stalkers and become doers of the Word?

Do you feel as if you have “skin in the game” when it comes to your faith in Christ? If not, what can you do to become more real with Him?

CHAPTER 30: PALMS UP

I used to think clinched fists would help me fight better, but now I know they make me weaker.

What are assumptions people have about following Jesus?

Related Bible verses:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” Matthew 5:43-44

Consider this paradigm shift from Jesus. How does He want His believers to behave differently?

CHAPTER 31: TWO BUNK JOHN

I used to think that taking a risk would reduce the number of friends I have, but now I know that love draws more people in.

If you could go off road with your life, where would you go?

Bob told John, “John, I dare you to spin the globe, throw your finger down, and pick a place to plug in.” Now, imagine he’s saying the same thing to you. Where will you plug in?

Related Bible verse:

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” Matthew 19:26

If the limits of our love are based on the limits of God’s love, what can we do with His help?

EPILOGUE

Now that you’ve finished Bob’s book, what will you do? If this book sparked an idea, write down a place you plan to begin.

* Note: This is an augmented version of the online publication by Paula Whidden, "Bible Study Companion to the book, LOVE DOES: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World," by Bob Goff. The original publication is found at www.faithfulchoices.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Bible-Study-Companion-to-Love-Does.pdf.