

# **Book Study Questions**

## **Lessons I Learned in the Dark: Steps to Walking by Faith, Not by Sight**

By Jennifer Rothschild

*Consider having a group of friends over on a weekly basis to discuss **Lessons**. These questions can be used for personal study or as discussion starters. Lifeway will be publishing a “bible-study” based on **Lessons** in September 2003. Look for **Walking by Faith** video-enhanced bible study at Lifeway Christian Stores in September 2003 - and keep in touch with Jennifer at [www.JenniferRothschild.com](http://www.JenniferRothschild.com)*

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## **Chapter 1, Take the First Step**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Help me Lord to have the eyes of faith. Help me to 'walk by faith and not by sight' (2 Cor. 5:7). Help me not to rely on what is seen, but rather learn that 'faith is the substance of what is hoped for, the evidence of what is not seen (Heb. 11:1)'...*

1. According to Hebrews 11:1, what is faith?
  
2. According to your own understanding and experience, what is faith?
  
3. Hebrews chapter 11 contains a list of Faith Heroes. What do these faith heroes have in common?
  
4. What did the apostle Paul have in common with the Faith Heroes, according to 2 Corinthians 5:7.
  
5. What do you have in common with these Faith Heroes? Do you walk by faith or do you walk by sight? Please give examples.

The following questions are based upon the "Confident Stride" section of Chapter 1.

- i. Assuming that Christ is the center of your life, how does "remaining centered" help you walk by faith?
  
  - ii. Knowing that God's Word is our map, how does "having a map in mind" help you walk by faith?
  
  - iii. How does "listening to God's voice" help you walk by faith?
6. What does it mean for our faith to become sight?

## **Chapter 2, Give Your Guide a Taste Test**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Lord, I choose to trust in you with all of my heart, not leaning on my own understanding. (Prov.3:5) When I am afraid, I will trust in you. (Psalm 56:3)*

1. Psalm 34:8 is an invitation to risk trusting God, what will be the result of trusting God?
2. Nahum 1:7 tells us that the Lord is good, what is His response to those who trust in Him?
3. Is it possible to separate who God is from what he says? Look at John 1:1 to help you consider this question.
4. When we walk by faith, we can't always see what's ahead, how does His Word help us navigate our faith walk? Look at Psalm 119:105.
5. Proverbs 5:21 gives us a great reason we can trust God, what is it?
6. Remember what 'kataphroneo' means? It means to \_\_\_\_\_ lowly or consider with\_\_\_\_\_. Do you "esteem your feelings lowly?"
7. What you esteem highly, you will allow to govern you, but what you esteem lowly, you will govern. Do you trust your feelings more than God's word? Do you esteem God's Word more highly than your feelings?
8. In Psalm 56:3, the psalmist said to God, "when I am afraid, I will trust in you." This verse shows the contrast between *our condition* and *our volition*. How can you make an 'I will' statement to God that will change your 'I am'?

9. Choosing to trust God and His Word gives us the resources to cast out fear. Read 2 Timothy 1:7 to determine what God has and has not given us.

God **has not** given us \_\_\_\_\_

God **has** given us \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you use the resources God has given you?

10. When we lovingly fear God we have the wisdom to discern that nothing else is really worth fearing. (Psalm 111:10) Do you fear God? Does His wisdom guide your response to fear?

### **Chapter 3, Remember What Matters**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Thank you Lord, that as I walk by faith, 'your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.'* (Psalm 119:105) *Today I choose to 'hide your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.'* (Psalm 119:11)

1. As we walk by faith, we must learn to do as the Psalmist did in Psalm 119:16. "I will \_\_\_\_\_ myself in Your statutes; I will not \_\_\_\_\_ Your word." Do you delight in God's Word? How?
2. In the "Something to Keep in Mind" section of chapter 3, review the list of verses from the New Century version of the Bible and write down a passage of scripture that you need to memorize to help you when your life seems dark.
3. In Psalm 78:14, we see two things the children of Israel probably remembered from their time in the wilderness, what were they?
4. What does a cloud in the Old Testament represent? See Exodus 24:15-16 and Exodus 33:8-10.
5. I'm sure the Hebrew children remembered the cloud in the desert. Why did God allow them to wander for so long? Look at Deuteronomy 8:2.
6. Have you ever been in a desert or in the wilderness before? If so, please explain.
7. What do you remember that God taught you there? Do you remember the *cloud*?
8. Read Deuteronomy 31:8. What does this verse tell you about God's presence even when life is uncertain or dark?

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9. It's important to maintain what we've memorized. When we hide God's word in our heart and meditate upon it, we gain many benefits. List what you see in Psalm 119 below.

Psalm 119:24 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119: 28 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119: 35 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:52 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 199:98 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:99 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:103 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119: 104 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119: 105 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:130 \_\_\_\_\_

10. What does Deuteronomy 11:18-19 show us about how we should handle God's word? Do you give God's Word priority in your life? Do you seek to remember it? How?

## **Chapter 4, Receive God's Gifts with Thanks**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Dear Father, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let me be thankful and thus worship you. (Hebrews 12:28) I will be thankful in all things, for this is your will for me in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:18)*

1. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:18, what is God's will for you?

As you examine the verse, does Paul tell us to be thankful IN all circumstances or FOR all circumstances?

What does that mean to you?

2. Do you have a difficult gift in your life?

Is your response to difficult gifts based on the 'gift' itself or on your desire to honor the Giver and do His will?

3. Have you been able to see God's goodness even in your difficult gift?
4. Read Luke 7:11-19. After Jesus healed the lepers, how many returned to say thank you?
5. Which of the lepers best describes you? Are you the one returning to thank Jesus or are you one of the nine?
6. According to 1 Peter 4: 12,13, what does Peter recommend we do when trials come our way?

## **Chapter 5, Rejoice – No Matter What!**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Dear Lord Jesus, it is your joy that has become my strength. (Nehemiah 8:10) I know sorrow may last through the night, but rejoicing will come in the morning. (Psalm 30:5)*

1. What does James 1:2 tell us to do when it comes to the trials in our lives?
2. Pretend your name is Webster and you wrote the dictionary. What are some other words for "consider"?
3. What does it mean to "consider it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds?"
4. What is the purpose of discipline according to Hebrews 12:10,11?
5. In the same verse, what does discipline produce?
6. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:27 that he daily "buffets" his body. To "buffet" means to train by hardship. What in your life "buffets" you?
7. According to Romans 5:3-5, what is produced when we rejoice in suffering?
8. Look at James 1:2-3 to see what the testing of your faith produces.
9. According to Hebrews 10:36, why do we need to persevere?

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10. Compare Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-3, what is the result of perseverance?
  
11. Notice the two places where we are called to rejoice. “Not only so, but we also rejoice in \_\_\_\_\_, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.” (Romans 5:3) “Rejoice in \_\_\_\_\_ always. I will say it again, Rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4)
  
12. When we choose to rejoice we invite the joy of the Lord into our circumstance. What does his joy provide? (Nehemiah 8:10)
  
13. Read Isaiah 61:3. Have you received His beauty for your ashes? Have you traded your mourning for His joy? Have you settled for despair or do you choose to praise?

## **Chapter 6, Run with Endurance**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Father, I will find peace in knowing that you guide in the way of wisdom and lead me along a straight path. When I walk, my steps will not be hampered; when I run, I will not stumble. (Proverbs 4:11-12) "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God." (Psalm 63:8)*

1. What two things do Hebrews 12:1 tell us to do in order to run with endurance?
2. What does God do for you when you are tempted to sin? Look at 1 Cor. 10:13.
3. Are there molehill size sins you need to deal with so they don't become mountains that cause you to stumble? What are they and what can you do to change them?
4. The point of running with endurance is to run well and finish the race. This means that often we need to assess our lives to see if there are any weights we need to get rid of. Are there any GOOD things in your life that are weighing you down? Have you allowed GOOD things to substitute for the BEST things?
5. What was the response of the people who saw Jesus in Mark 9:15?
6. When was the last time you were "overwhelmed with wonder" at the thought of Jesus? Were you compelled to RUN to Him?
7. Read Psalm 63:8 and Psalm 42:1. What mental pictures do these verses draw for you? In your own words, how would you describe your own longing to run to Him?



## **Chapter 7, Fall Down...Get Up**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Precious Father, help me today as I learn to fall before you. Show me how to walk in the way of the wise, making the most of my time. (Eph. 5:15-16) Help me to rise again, no matter how many times I have fallen. (Proverbs 24:16)*

### **Questions 1-4 refer to the "Why We Fall" section of chapter seven.**

1. What does Proverbs 18:12 remind us about pride and humility? Are you prancing with pride or are you clothed in humility? What are practical ways we see this in our lives?

2. How does Ephesians 5:15 recommend that we walk?

Do the right priorities direct your steps or do misplaced ones cause you to stumble?

3. What does God command us to do in Psalm 46:10?

Do you schedule 'stillness' into your calendar? What are some practical ways to do this?

4. Look at Psalm 119:32 and write down why the Psalmist could 'run in the path of God's commands.' Are you weighed down with the load you carry or is liberty your lifestyle?

5. Read 1 Samuel 15 and 2 Samuel 11. These chapters tell the stories of two kings and their falls. King David recovered from his fall yet King Saul did not. Read Psalm 51:3-4 and tell why David bounced back from his fall.

6. As we walked by faith there will be potential potholes that may cause us to fall. It is important therefore to watch where we walk. Look at Proverbs 12:28 and consider... where do you walk? Does each step lead you toward life or death? If you fall there, will you land on THE ROCK or end up sinking like one?

7. Read Jude 24. Who is the one who keeps us from falling?

What does this verse mean to you?

8. Do you choose to fall down in your heart before you get up each morning?

## **Chapter 8, Dance the Night Away**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Dear Lord, please teach me to dance freely, knowing that you will meet all my needs according to Your glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:19) Thank you for knowing me completely and showing me unconditional love. (Psalm 139: 1-4)*

1. What does Philippians 4:19 reveal about why we can depend fully on God?
2. What does Psalm 139:1-4 reveal about why we can depend on God?
3. Under the "Risking What You Can't Lose" subhead of this chapter, Jennifer describes a 'soul loneliness' produced by the isolation of blindness. She writes, "If the isolation that accompanies blindness compels me to a deeper connection with God, I am the richer. All of us need to treasure anything within us that makes us feel just a little detached from the arena of human experience, for it may be the one thing God mercifully gives us to tie us to himself and fill our need to be known by Him." Is there anything in your life that produces 'soul loneliness'? Do you allow your feeling of isolation to become a lifeline to Christ? Please Explain.
4. Consider what the greater need in your life is. Is it to be independent and self sufficient, or is it to be known by and dependent on God?
5. In Matthew 14:28-29 read the account of Peter's 'Dance Lesson'. What occurs immediately before Peter steps onto the surface of the water?





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6. Look at the 'Abiding by Passenger Protocol' subhead of this chapter and consider the following questions.

A. Are there areas in your life where you need to "loosen your grip?"

If so, write out what God is telling you in Matthew 6:25.

B. Do you need to "rest where you are?" If so, write out what God is telling you in Matthew 11:30.

C. Do you "follow the ONE in front?" If you struggle with this, write out what Galatians 2:20 reveals is the key to being a successful follower.

7. In Luke 9:23, Jesus states three demands for those who would 'come after Him.' What are they?

If we do so, what will we gain according to Luke 9:24?

## **Chapter 10, Laugh at Yourself**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Dear Father, thank you that 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made.'* (Psalm 139: 14) *I know you have 'have this treasure in a jar of clay' so that it will be obvious to all that this all-surpassing power is from you.* (2 Cor. 4:7) *Today I choose to 'humble myself before you so that you will lift me up.'* (James 4:10)

1. Just as you've been reminded to "Remember What Matters", be encouraged that God always remembers what matters.....YOU! List what you see in the mirror of His word.... It's a picture of you.

I Samuel 12:22\_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 43:1\_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 43:4\_\_\_\_\_

Jeremiah 31:3\_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 6:20\_\_\_\_\_

II Corinthians 5:17\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 1:4\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:10\_\_\_\_\_

I Peter 2:9\_\_\_\_\_

2. The above verses show how much we are loved and how serious God is about us. Yet sometimes we don't let that reality sink in. Are you more influenced by God's opinion of you or by the opinion of others?
3. Does the mirror in your bathroom or the mirror of God's word dictate your self-esteem?
4. Pride is our veiled attempt to protect our fragile ego from being exposed and feeling small. According to Proverbs 29:23, what does pride bring and what does humility bring?
5. Humility is the key to a healthy self image because God is the one that puts the "Steam in our Self-Esteem". What does James 4:10 encourage us to do?

6. Refer back to the list of verses at the beginning of the chapter 10 worksheet. These verses reflect WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST. Sometimes our self-esteem is low because we define ourselves by WHAT WE STRUGGLE WITH rather than WHO WE ARE. List below what you struggle with and who you are. Then by faith, choose to define yourself by who you are in Christ.

**What I struggle with**

Ex: feeling unattractive  
defeat

**Who I am in Christ**

fearfully and wonderfully made  
more than a conqueror

## **Chapter 11, Cry When You Hurt**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Lord, teach me to understand and know that you are near to all who call on you in truth. Thank you for hearing my many cries for help and saving me. (Psalm 145:18-19)*

1. John 11 hosts the account of Lazarus' death. After the sisters, Mary and Martha, greeted Jesus, He had an emotional response. Look at John 11:33-35 and describe Jesus' reaction.
2. What things do you see in Psalm 56:8 that show us Jesus understands and cares about our sorrow?
3. In Luke 19:41- 44 we see another occasion when Jesus wept. What was the reason for his tears?
4. Do you think God ever weeps when He looks into your heart? If so, why?
5. Read the words of Jesus in Luke 7:44-48. In the box below, list the contrast between the prostitute's actions and Simon's actions.

	<b><u>Simon</u></b>	<b><u>Prostitute</u></b>
<b><u>1.</u></b>		
<b><u>2.</u></b>		
<b><u>3.</u></b>		

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6. Which of the two above really experienced the presence of Christ and ministered to Him? Why?
  
7. The religion of Simon did not minister to Jesus, the woman's love did. Consider, do you allow your religion to be a shallow substitute for experiencing Jesus' presence in your life?

Under the subhead, "When the Soul Cries."

8. Please read Psalm 145:8-9. We see that crying 'soul tears' to God invites Him to cleanse and protect us. In what areas do you need His cleansing? In what areas do you need His protection? Cry out to God concerning your needs.

## **Chapter 12, Wait on God**

As you read the following chapter, highlight passages of scripture that you may use at the conclusion of this week's study to pray back to God. For example, *Precious Father, Help me to delight in you and make the desires of my heart be your desires for me. (Phil. 2:13) I pray that today YOU would be the object of my delight. (Ps. 34:7)*

**Please review the 'Way We Wait' subhead at the beginning of this chapter.**

1. Which kind of 'waiter' are you most like?
  - *The Worried Waiter*: Are you wringing your hands or bending your knees?
  - The Wishful Waiter: Are you present where you are, or do you pine away over things that are not?
  - **The Wise Waiter**: Are you waiting on God alone or waiting for the wait to end?
  
2. We often spend time waiting for our heart's desires to be filled. What does Psalm 37:4 tell us to do while we wait?
  
3. Sometimes we look at Psalm 37:4 as a blank check, if we delight in God, He'll give us what we want. What do you think the verse means?
  
4. Honestly assess your desires. Where do they show your delight to be?  
For example:

<b><u>Desire</u></b>	<b><u>Delight</u></b>
"I desire to be rich"	Materialism
"I want to be skinny"	Vanity
  
5. When we delight in God, He places in us the desires He wants us to have. What does Phil. 2:13 tell us about God's purpose for our desires?

