



The Heaven Experience Book Study

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Book Club Discount

Your book club members get \$5 off the book when using the code: HEAVEN4ME at: <https://store.meta-formation.com/products/heaven-experience-the-extraordinary>

Tips for Launching a Great Group

Audience

This outline is designed for anyone interested in heaven—truth seekers, Christian believers, avid readers—who like discussion that goes beyond the surface. The questions are heart-oriented, and encourage people to share their own experiences, feelings and desires. You may be surprised at how open your group becomes!

Focus on Heart, Not Head

This book is about *experiencing* heaven, not analyzing or theologizing about it! The goal is that people develop a vivid picture of heaven, not that they figure out the ‘right’ answers. The leader’s job is not to be the heaven expert, but just to get people discussing what they’ve read and how it impacts their hearts.

You may find that some folks need to see how the book connects with what was written 2000 years ago in the Bible. If so, videos covering the scriptures behind key topics are provided for each chapter, available at the link below. Because the videos are more ‘head’ oriented and analytical, we normally ask people to view them on their own instead of taking group time for it. See www.HeavensPerspective.com/videos .

Ground Rules

Ground rules are important to a healthy group—if people get shut down or feel disrespected when they share, things go south fast. The ‘*At Your First Meeting*’ section on page 5 includes a typical set of ground rules. Feel free and modify them to suit your group.

Schedule

We’ve provided schedules for reading two, three or four chapters a week, so you can choose the right pace for your group. Since each chapter has its own set of Discussion Questions, you can easily adapt the material to fit your schedule

This guide contains more Discussion Questions and Imagination Exercises than you can cover in a group session, *especially* if you are doing three or four chapters a week. So feel free to pick and choose! If you run out of time before you run out of questions, that just means you’re having a great discussion.

Notes on the Outlines

Here are the parts of a typical chapter discussion outline and what they're for:

Accountability Questions

Each chapter has a short-answer question to provide **accountability** for that week's reading (everybody hates a book group where nobody reads the book!) The idea is, you can't come and hide—everyone has to share an insight from the book, so everyone knows if you read it or not.

If a person hasn't done the reading, we still want them to come and participate! Just ask, "When can you put it in your calendar for next week?" and have them schedule it right away! It's a positive way to get people to read instead of getting frustrated when they don't. Every chapter includes an accountability question, but you only need ONE of them at the start of each meeting.

Optional Triads

In large groups, use breakout groups of three so the accountability question is more effective and takes less time. Sharing results of imagination exercises or some discussion questions in triads can also give everyone more of a chance to share.

30-Second Overview

Read this short summary to refresh everyone's memory before you discuss that chapter.

Discussion Questions

This is the meat of the group time. Asking what touched their hearts or what they want to talk about will get things rolling. Additional questions are provided to deepen the discussion; probably more than you will need. You don't need to cover them all!

Imagination Exercises

The goal is to experience heaven, not just analyze it—and that's what these exercises do! They're a fun way to help folks internalize what they've read or see it more vividly in their minds. You can also use them to liven up the discussion if things get slow.

Italics

Things you say verbatim (like imagination exercise instructions) are italicized.

Extra Resources

The last few pages of the book feature additional resources for learning more or sharing The Heaven Experience with others. The overall outline includes two places (Chapter 13 and the Epilogue) to highlight them. If group members have received free- or reduced-cost materials, it's also an opportunity to pay it forward and bring the book to others.



Schedules

This book has a lot to talk about! Below are three schedule options, for covering two, three, or four chapters a week.

Twelve Week Schedule (Two Chapters per Week)

| Week# | Date | Reading |
|-------|------|------------------------------|
| 1 | | Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2 |
| 2 | | Chapters 3 & 4 |
| 3 | | Chapters 5 & 6 |
| 4 | | Chapters 7 & 8 |
| 5 | | Chapters 9 & 10 |
| 6 | | Chapters 11 & 12 |
| 7 | | Chapters 13 & 14 |
| 8 | | Chapters 15 & 16 |
| 9 | | Chapters 17 & 18 |
| 10 | | Chapters 19 & 20 |
| 11 | | Chapters 21 & 22 |
| 12 | | Chapter 23 & Epilogue |

Eight Week Schedule (Three Chapters per Week)

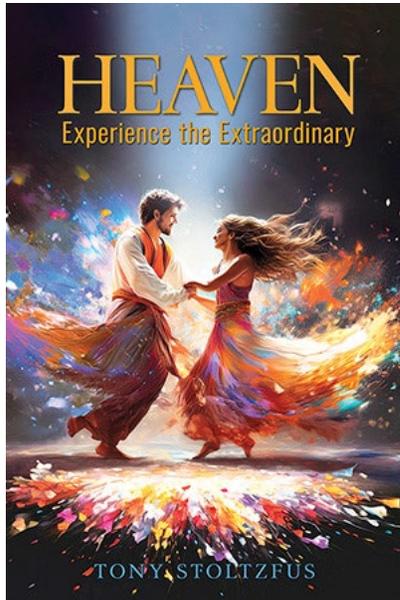
| Week# | Date | Reading |
|-------|------|----------------------------|
| 1 | | Introduction, Chapters 1-3 |
| 2 | | Chapters 4-6 |
| 3 | | Chapters 7-9 |
| 4 | | Chapters 10-12 |
| 5 | | Chapters 13-15 |
| 6 | | Chapters 16-18 |
| 7 | | Chapters 19-21 |
| 8 | | Chapters 22-23, Epilogue |

Six Week Schedule (Four Chapters per Week)

| Week# | Date | Reading |
|-------|------|----------------------------|
| 1 | | Introduction, Chapters 1-4 |
| 2 | | Chapters 5-8 |
| 3 | | Chapters 9-12 |
| 4 | | Chapters 13-16 |
| 5 | | Chapters 17-20 |
| 6 | | Chapters 21-23, Epilogue |

Sample Book Club Invitation

Here's a sample invitation you can use—feel free and modify it to suit. It includes a photo, a link to a book excerpt, a link to the web site and more!



I just picked up a great new book on heaven, and I'd like to invite you to join a book club to go through it together!

The book is *Heaven: Experience the Extraordinary* by Tony Stoltzfus. It's a mind-blowing story, an adventure of actually living in a heaven where gravity is optional, doing anything wrong is impossible, and travel at the speed of thought is normal.

We'll join the main character, Amanda, as she leaps off the cliff at the edge of heaven and is caught up on the wings of Hope, learns about heaven's extra dimensions, is reunited with her father, and meets the betrayer that has become his best friend. And the God of this heaven is relentless good, beyond what you may have dreamt or imagined. If you want a sample, below is a link to a FREE excerpt.

I'm really looking forward to imagining heaven together—I think you're going to love it!

Details

We're starting on ____ and we'll meet _____ and cover ____ chapters each time. Please let me know by ____ if you want to come!

Visit the book's website here: <https://www.HeavenExperience.net>

Download a free excerpt here: <https://www.HeavenExperience.net/heavenexcerpt.pdf>

Get ahold of me if you have any questions!

At Your First Meeting...

Housekeeping (10 min)

NOTE: This week has more instructions at the beginning because we are just starting.

- 1) **Schedules:** print and pass out or have people mark dates in their calendars.
- 2) **Reminder:** *"If you binge and read the whole book at once, no problem! But please go back and reread the chapters we're covering that week to refresh your memory."*
- 3) **Ground Rules.** Ask the group for assent on each: "Do you like this idea? Is this something we want to commit to?"
 - a. If someone didn't do the reading, we ask: "When can you put it in your calendar for this coming week?" And they schedule it right then!
 - b. Everybody shares, no one dominates. We help each other get equal time.
 - c. We're on an adventure to experience heaven together. We focus on how the book touches our hearts, not finding 'right' answers.
 - d. We respect what others share. We aren't here to fix or correct each other.
 - e. Make your own rule: _____
- 4) **Video:** play the "Book Club Intro" video at www.HeavenExperience.net/Videos

OPTIONAL: If You Are Using Triads (10 min)

For large groups, set up triads. It will save time if you stay in the same triads throughout the book study.

1. Form Groups:
 - a. Have everyone stand.
 - b. Say, "Grab two other people (here's a great chance to get to know someone new), and when you have three, sit down." This makes it easy to tell who is not yet in a group. Help the stragglers get connected
2. Ask the accountability question for the week in your triads.
 - a. If someone didn't do the reading, have peers ask: "When do you plan to do it this coming week?" Then have them schedule it in their phone.

Chapter 1: Afterlife

30-Second Summary (read this aloud)

“The Introduction supplies the central dilemma of understanding heaven: to grasp it, you need extra-dimensional senses and language. It’s impossible to fully comprehend heaven with the language of earth. So our goal is not being right about heaven, but experiencing it, with the eyes of trust.

“Amanda awakens in Chapter One in a world where everything—including her own body!—is transparent. In this world of light, the inside of a thing is more real and visible than the outside. Look at any object and you are gazing back in time: seeing its whole history. She finds it impossible to be afraid, even when calling up troubling memories from her past. In the process, we also learn about Amanda’s deep need to know, and how her curiosity is both a gift and a defense mechanism.”

Accountability Question

This short-answer question encourages people to do the reading. If someone didn’t read the chapters, ask, *“When can you put it in your calendar for this coming week?”* and have them schedule it right then! (Do only ONE accountability question per session.)

- *“In a sentence or two, what’s one insight or new thought you got from Chapter One?”*

Discussion Questions

1. On page xii of the introduction, what attitude is Amanda asking you to read with? How will our discussion be different if we’re experiencing heaven vs. analyzing it?
 - a. [NOTE: If people start to get lost in theologizing or analyzing, you can ask, *“Is that an experiencing heaven question or a figuring it out question?”*]
2. What’s something you highlighted in Chapter One? [Go around the circle, then discuss each topic.]
3. What do you think your first moments after death will be like (pg. 1-3)?
4. What would it be like to live in a place where it is impossible to be afraid? How would your life change (pg. 13)?
 - a. What would it be like to live in a world with no enemies (pg. 13)?
5. What do you identify with in Amanda as a character?
 - a. Her curiosity? Her need to know? Her relationship with her dad?

Imagination Exercise: The Heaven Game

“Let’s make a list: what are some of the little frustrations in this life that won’t be in heaven? As in, ‘There’s no _____ in heaven.’”

1. Minor annoyances: like mosquitoes, dirty dishes, stubbed toes
2. Maintenance tasks: haircuts, changing the oil, getting cash at the ATM
3. Stuff you could do without: working for a living, getting old, commuting
4. Things: money, computers, I.D. cards

Optional Video: Why is Heaven Transparent?

Chapter 2: Dimensions

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter Two, Amanda explores the possibilities of extra time dimensions: never running out of time, no missing out, reliving old memories, being fully known. She also discovers her new heavenly senses and learns how all senses are united. The high point is recognizing that The Voice has been speaking to her, and hearing the story of the formation of earth and the coming of the Man of Light.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

Remember to ask those who didn't complete the reading, *“When can you put it in your calendar for this coming week?”* And schedule it right then!

- “In two sentences, what's one cool thing you learned about heaven in this chapter?”

Discussion Questions

1. What questions do you have about extra dimensions?
2. What's one thing that excites you about how time works in heaven (pg. 19-21)?
 - a. What would it be like to be able to go back and re-experience any fond memory in living color? What memories would you want to relive (pg. 19)?
 - b. What would change about life if you were off the clock forever (pg. 20-21)?
3. How does it feel to be desired (pg. 22)? What does that do for your heart?
4. How have you experienced 'The Voice' in your own life (pg. 24-25)?
 - a. The idea on page 22-23 is that God speaks to us in ways we may not even be aware of at the time. Has that happened to you? How?
5. What about story of the forging of earth and the coming of the Man of Light touched your heart (pg. 26-28)?
 - a. At the end of this story, evil passes completely out of existence. What about that appeals to you? What might it mean (pg. 27)?

Imagination Exercise: Meeting The Voice (Pen and Paper Needed)

Instructions: *“Close your eyes, relax, and try to envision this scene from the book. After I read it aloud, I'll give you a few minutes to picture it in your mind and absorb it.”*

1. Read out loud the section in page 25-26 of Chapter Three where 'The Voice' is revealed in three 'I AM's.'
2. Allow a few minutes for people to picture it, then a few more to jot down thoughts or images that came to mind.
3. Have people share what they saw or felt.

Optional Video: Does Heaven Have More Dimensions?

Chapter 3: The Story

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter Three, Amanda learns that she is now alive in the One Life of heaven, and that heaven’s life doesn’t need to be supported by biology. Everything in heaven is inside a person—The One—and his love is a gravity that draws all things to himself. In the presence of this love, the fear that love will hurt her and leave her alone begins to surface. Yet the wonders of heaven (like looking through her eyelids!) keep pulling her forward, til she reaches the cliff at the edge of the Beautiful Land.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

Remember to ask those who didn’t complete the reading, *“When can you put it in your calendar for this coming week?”* And schedule it right then!

- In a sentence or two, what in this chapter caught your attention or made you laugh?

Discussion Questions

1. What got you emotional or made you tear up in this chapter?
2. What part of Amanda’s doubts, fears or griefs do you identify with? How?
3. What do you think of the concept of ‘life being supported by biology but originating with a touch from ‘The Light’ on page 30?
 - a. How about, ‘In the beginning, One Life. At the end, One Life’” (pg. 31)?
 - b. ‘The cosmos is a person and her inside it’ (pg. 32-33).
 - c. ‘Love is the gravity of heaven’ (pg. 35-36)?
4. Amanda’s thinking on earth has been ‘fuzzy, infinitely distractable, non-linear’ (pg. 37-38). When do you feel like that? What if you suddenly had the clarity of heaven?
5. If you were Amanda, what would you think and feel as you come to the very edge of heaven?

Imagination Exercise: The Edge (Pen and Paper Needed)

Instructions: *“We’re going to stand on the edge of heaven, and ask the Man of Light to give us new details to add to this picture. Let your imagination roam, and whatever you see or hear or sense, jot it down.”*

1. Have people close their eyes, and visualize the scene as you read the 2nd through the 6th paragraph under the heading “The Edge” on pg. 38-39, starting with ‘Amanda paused...’
2. Then ask, “Man of Light, what details do you want to give us to add to this picture?”
3. Give people two minutes of silence to imagine and listen.
4. Say, “Now, jot down whatever you heard, saw, or sensed; or whatever came into your mind.”
5. After a couple minutes more, have people share what they saw or heard.

Optional Video: Heaven is in God

Chapter 4: Trust

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter Four begins with Amanda at the cliff on the edge of heaven, hearing the fateful words: ‘The only way down is the path of trust. And you don’t trust me.’ Then the Voice walks her through recognizing the breakdown of trust in her life, how it sprung from her deepest wound, and the belief she used as a defense mechanism: that she had to be a good girl to escape punishment. Releasing that moral yardstick, she again approaches the brink, but this time her anger holds her back. When she asks the unanswerable question and is given the comfort and companionship her heart craves, she is finally free to take the Great Leap—and the Man of Light catches her on the wings of Hope.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

Each person shares briefly. Remember to ask those who didn’t complete the reading, *“When can you put it in your calendar for this coming week?”* And schedule it right then!

- What’s one thing you loved about meeting the Man of Light on page 54?

Discussion Questions

NOTE: There is no imagination exercise because it’s a pretty emotionally intense chapter!

1. What part of Amanda’s struggle at the edge of the cliff touched you most deeply? [Go around the circle. Discuss what touched each person.]
2. On page 43, the sadness of loss is pictured as ‘a child sitting in a puddle, shivering as the cold and wet feeling of grieving seeped up like chilly water on her bum.’
 - a. When have you felt like that? What did you lose?
 - b. What unhelpful platitudes have people given you when you’re hurting (pg. 59)?
 - c. What actually helped you grieve in your experience of loss?
3. The book describes a ‘terrible moment that tore a hole in Amanda’s heart’—when she was punished for playing with her mom’s makeup on page 44. Out of it, Amanda created a defense mechanism to avoid future pain: being a good girl.
 - a. What’s your go-to defense mechanism? What a painful experience early in life led you to take it on?
 - b. If The Voice spoke to your heart right now like he did to Amanda’s on pages 44-45, what would she say to you?
4. We all search for someone to hold responsible for our pain. It might be God, your parents, a friend or enemy—even yourself. Who is it for you (pg. 49)?
 - a. What’s the unanswerable question ‘why’ you’ve asked in your pain (pg. 50)?
 - b. What happened when you asked it?
5. Have you ever found healing like Amanda did on pages 51-60? What happened?
 - a. What touched your heart in Amanda’s healing story?

Optional Video: Healing and Heaven

Chapter 5: Flight

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter Five Amanda finds a black stone called despair in her hand. Free at last, she throws it off the edge, where it transforms into dazzling being called Hope. Flinging herself off the cliff, she is caught on the wings of Hope, and discovers she can fly. Surveying the land and the Great River below, she finds the Man of Light flying next to her. She learns that the gratitude in her heart is received as worship by The One, that all the pain of earth is as small as a marble compared to the universe of love that is heaven, and that her past has been put behind her forever.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s something you underlined in this chapter? In two sentences, tell us why!

Discussion Questions

1. What gave you joy in Chapter Five? [Go around the circle, and discuss each topic]
2. Despair turned to hope when Amanda let go of it, trusted The Man of Light to catch her and took a leap of faith on pages 61-63. Have you had an experience like that?
3. Have you ever had a ‘flying dream’ like Amanda’s on page 64? What was it like?
 - a. What would you do if you could fly today? Where would you go?
4. What do you think of the idea on pages 65-66 that water on earth is patterned after water in heaven, and not vice versa?
5. If heaven isn’t an endless worship service—if worship there is more a state of being than an action—are you disappointed or relieved? Why (pg. 67-68)?
 - a. Were you looking forward to endless worship or did you secretly think it sounded kind of tedious?
6. If you were certain beyond the shadow of a doubt that God wasn’t mad at you for anything you’d done, how would that change how you view him (pg. 69-70)?

Imagination Exercise: Earthly Things in Heaven

“We’re going to make a list of things that are on earth that we think will still be there in heaven. What’s on your list? Think about:

- Things we created on earth, like music, art, or poetry.
- Everyday things we love: coffee, chocolate, pets, etc.
- Things that make us who we are: memories, names, personalities, physical characteristics.

Optional Video: Swallowed in an Ocean of Goodness

Chapter 6: Selective Memory

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter Six opens with The Man of Light explaining why he doesn’t show up as the irresistible version of himself on earth. Creating independent humans with free will made mutual love possible, yet it involved a great risk on the part of the Creator. But the risk has paid off! He has chosen to always see Amanda as she is in heaven and forget how she looks on earth. When we reach heaven, we receive the same gift: we can no longer see the old, broken-down version of ourselves. This Great Washing reformats Amanda’s memories, removing all the stains of earth from her soul. Instead of being judged by God, she is sent to the Court of Acquittal, where all charges are dropped.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s one detail of Amanda’s flight that stood out to you?

Discussion Questions

1. What’s something you highlighted in this chapter you’d like to talk about?
2. Have you ever wondered why God doesn’t just show up on earth and right every wrong like on page 75? What do you think of how the book treats this question?
3. Amanda jokes on page 74 that The Man of Light is in a ‘witness protection program for deities.’ Have you ever felt like that when you try to find God?
 - a. How does God’s being hidden relate to our freedom of choice (pg. 75)?
4. Had it occurred to you before that making humans was a risk for The Creator (pg. 77-78)? How does that thought impact you?
5. What would it be like if your bad memories were washed away, as on pages 85-87?
 - a. How would you be different if all your hurt, grief, fear, and anxiety were gone?
6. Many think that when they get to heaven, God is going to show them a movie of their whole life and everything they did wrong. Have you ever thought that way?
 - a. What if you faced a Court of Acquittal (pg. 88) instead of one of Judgement?

Imagination Exercise: The Great Washing (Pen and Paper Needed)

Instructions: *“In the Great Washing (pg. 85), The Man of Light walks into all our memories, sharing a sunset, crying with us or holding us when we hurt, working to redeem our mistakes. We’re going to ask him to give us a taste of that washing in our memories from the last two weeks. Close your eyes, sit quietly for a few minutes, and let those recent memories bubble up inside you. When a memory comes up, imagine The Man of Light entering it. What does he do or says when he shows up? Notice the expression on his face and the feelings he conveys.”* [Give people several minutes to experience this.]

1. Say, *“Jot down what you saw, heard or sensed. Don’t judge it or try to figure out if it is just your own thoughts or a touch from God—just write it down.”*
2. Have each person share one memory Jesus came into, what he did there, and how that impacted their heart.

Optional Video: The Court of Acquittal

Chapter 7: Reunion

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter Seven, Amanda and The Man of Light touch down in The Beautiful Land, where every flower and tree is lit from within. Sprinting across the grass, she has a joyous reunion with her father in place of the usual welcoming committee. Theo explains that everyone you invest in or treat with kindness is your descendant, even some who died before you were born, since heaven works both forward and backward in time. He gives Father Abraham as an example of how this kind of inheritance can endure for 200 generations. And then Amanda discovers travel at the speed of thought...”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What was one mind-bending idea you found in this chapter?

Imagination Exercise: Reunion with a Loved One (pg. 95)

Instructions: Read this slowly: *“Think of the loved one you’d most like to be reunited with when you get to heaven. Imagine yourself running across a meadow to meet them, faster than you’ve ever run before. Feel the wind rushing through your hair and across your skin. Your loved one approaches, hearty and happy and perfect. Imagine their face, their expression. Then you come together, falling into each other’s embrace; whirling around in a joyful dance. Be in that moment”* [Give them a minute].

1. “What did you see or feel as you imagined that reunion?”
2. “If that person said the words you always longed to hear from them, what would they be? What would you say to them?”
3. “What question would you want to ask that you never knew the answer to?”

Discussion Questions

1. What ideas from this chapter do you want to talk about? [go around the circle and discuss.]
2. Ever had a dream about heaven (pg. 94)? What happened? What did it feel like?
3. What do you think of how heaven counts descendants on page 98?
 - a. Get creative: who will be your unexpected descendant in heaven? Who will be your heavenly ‘ancestors?’
 - b. Imagine meeting Father Abraham (pg. 101). What would you say to each other?
4. What do you think of the idea of ‘fast traveling’ on page 102?
 - c. If you could travel at the speed of thought (pg. 102), where would you go?

Optional Video: Your Welcoming Committee in Heaven

Chapter 8: The Great Reversal

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter Eight begins with a discussion of the inside-out nature of heaven: that the inner essence of a thing is visible on the outside. Knowing itself is different in heaven—more a matter of heart than head. Theo recalls viewing portraits by the Dutch masters to demonstrate how The Maker expands our being into more dimensions. As they watch fast-travelers rocket across the sky, they explore why the openness of heaven would be a disaster on earth, and how The Maker protected us with a garment of skin. Theo describes how this outer shell separates us from each other and from God, and the sacrifice the Maker made to keep us safe.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- In a sentence or two, what’s one implication of the Great Reversal or the garment of skin that made you stop and think?

Discussion Questions

1. What about the Great Reversal (pg. 105) do you want to discuss? [Go around the circle.]
2. What do you think of the idea on page 111 that the garment of skin which separates us and makes communication difficult is in fact a gift that protects us?
 - a. Ever been frustrated with this barrier and wished it would go away?
 - b. What if a Hitler or a Stalin had unrestricted access to your heart (pg. 114, 117)?
3. If you could be a kid again in heaven (pg. 114), what’s one thing you’d do?
4. Discuss the idea of the first and second death on page 116.
 - a. What do you get out of the laptop analogy on pages 116-117?
5. What would be different about your body if you were no longer dependent on biology (pg. 117) to sustain your life? (In other words, if you didn’t need food, digestion, intestines, or enzymes to power your cells?)

Imagination Exercise: God as Parent

Instructions: *“We’re going to read a section of the book that talks about how the garment of skin impacts The Maker’s heart. The idea is to identify with him—to feel what he feels by comparing it to our own parent-child relationships. Close your eyes, put yourself in The Maker’s position, and try to feel what he feels as I read.”*

1. Read the passage (pg. 119, paragraph 1-3) where Theo talks about God as a parent with children who never call.
2. “What happens in you as you identify with The Maker in this?”
3. “How did thinking of the sacrifice he made to protect us from the evil in each other impact you?”

Optional Video: The Great Reversal & the Garment of Skin

Chapter 9: Betrayer

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

"In Chapter Nine, Amanda meets the man who embezzled from her father and destroyed his business. Hesitant at first to talk with him, she is led through heaven's version of the betrayal story, and sees how heaven made it well by saving her father from grief and Caspar from suicide. Leaving them behind, she meets Celeste and discusses beauty and why evil oppresses women. Then she comes across a group of artists and discovers that the purpose of art is to capture the hand of The Maker in his creation."

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What did you enjoy about Amanda's meeting with Celeste (pg. 132)?

Discussion Questions

1. What would you like to discuss about Caspar (pg. 124)? [go around the circle]
2. What do you love about how heaven made all things well between Caspar, Theo and Amanda on pages 125-130?
3. What does Amanda have to let go of on page 124 when she meets her betrayer?
 - a. How have you been deeply betrayed?
 - b. Could heaven really make things well between you and your worst offender?
 - c. What would you have to let go of if you met the safe, healed version of that person in heaven?
4. What fascinated you about art and artists in heaven on pages 136-140?
 - a. If your body was able to perfectly execute what you see in your mind, what work of art would you create?
 - b. If you have a favorite medium (oils, watercolor, sculpture, dance, etc.) how might it be different in heaven?
5. On page 133, Amanda learns to feel beautiful and desirable in heaven. What impacts or intrigues you about that discussion?
 - a. Discuss the idea of The Evil being jealous of women (pg. 133-134).

Imagination Exercise: The Garments of Heaven

Instructions: *"Imagine your heavenly destiny was weaving the clothes of heaven. You have fabric with properties and capabilities beyond those of earth, and any design is possible. Brainstorm together for a bit:*

1. "What features of clothes you've liked on earth would you incorporate?"
2. "What could these clothes do that garments on earth can't?"
3. "What meaningful patterns would you incorporate in the weave? How would what you create reflect heaven?"

Optional Video: Forgiveness on Earth vs. Heaven

Chapter 10: Seeing

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter Ten begins by explaining how jealousy, grief and hurt come from lack, and because we lack nothing in heaven, those things never afflict us. ‘Seeing without seeing’ is Theo’s phrase for how earth is patterned after heaven. Examples include water, whose molecule echoes the trinity, or how when one of us is joyful everyone is. Theo mentions that on earth we even saw other people without seeing—then demonstrates by asking The Man of Light to share how heaven sees him. And Amanda’s view of her daddy is forever changed.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What was your favorite line from this chapter?

Discussion Questions

1. Chapter Ten is about how earth is patterned after heaven, not vice versa (pg. 146). What intrigued you about that idea?
 - a. What would it be like to see the people around us as heaven sees (pg. 150)?
2. Theo says, ‘Many things that required discipline and willpower on earth are immutable laws of nature in heaven.’ What does that mean (pg. 147, 5th para.)?
 - a. How would your life be different if change required no discipline or willpower?
3. The Man of Light has an infinite number of moments within each moment, so he always has time for you (pg. 154). Did you ever wonder if you’d have to stand in line?
4. Jealousy, grief and hurt come from emptiness (pg. 143-144). Can you identify?
 - a. What would it be like if it were impossible to be hurt (pg. 143)?
5. How does it impact your heart when Jesus tells Theo how he sees him, and all of heaven roars out its affirmation, too (pg. 150-151)?

Imagination Exercise: Affirmations (Pen and Paper Needed)

Instructions: *“On page 151, Jesus tells Theo what he sees in him. We’re going to try that with each other. We’ll pair up, and you’ll get a few minutes to think about what you want to say to your partner. Then we’ll each get to share our affirmations.*

*“Here’s the key: don’t compliment the person for things they have done (like saying, ‘good job’), but for **who they are**. What do you admire in this person? What inner qualities or character does their life display? How do you want to be like them? Affirming deeply is harder than it seems because it feels vulnerable: we’re asking you to share something significant and personal you might not normally say. So, stretch yourself a bit and say something powerful!”*

1. Pair up
2. Prepare: give people 3-5 minutes to think of some significant things to say.
3. In pairs, have each person share their affirmations. Each time an affirmation is given, ask the person affirmed to respond and say how those words touched his or her heart.

Optional Video: How Earth Is Patterned after Heaven

Chapter 11: Roses

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

"In Chapter 11, Theo and Amanda meet a pair of gardeners—Anastasia and an angel. The conversation drifts into work in heaven: how work was created as a channel for God to fill the desires of our hearts, but it becomes twisted when we look to the work itself to fill us. By way of example, Anastasia shares her own story of trying to find fulfillment by being a champion rosarian, and how the death of her plants ended up bringing her life. Then she demonstrates how gardening in heaven is done by speaking life to the seeds; and gives Amanda a chance to try it out herself."

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What was fun or interesting about the picture of the Burning Ones on page 157-158?

Discussion Questions

1. What in this chapter makes you happy, grateful or excited? [Go around the circle.]
2. Do you think there are animals in heaven (pg. 155-156)? What might they be like?
3. On pages 159-162, Anastasia tells how desire is a good thing, designed to draw us to The Maker—but can become twisted when we latch onto a person or thing to fill us. Have you ever pursued something to fill your heart, only to find that having it left you empty?
4. How did Anastasia's story on page 162 of the death and rebirth of her rose garden impact you?
 - a. Where has something like this happened in your own life?
5. What part of gardening in heaven (pg. 163) appealed to you?
 - a. If you could do your current job by simply speaking your desire and seeing it come to pass (pg. 167-170), what would you do?
 - b. What other good things would you do with that power?

Imagination Exercise: Who You Are

Instructions: *"I'm going to read the passage where Anastasia and Kepos tell Amanda how heaven sees her. Close your eyes, and imagine that these words are being said directly to you—this is who YOU are!"*

1. Read paragraphs two and three on page 169, beginning with, "You are the offspring of God..."
2. "Take a minute and absorb those words, and let them be true to your heart."
3. After a minute or two, ask, "How does that impact your heart? What do you feel when you absorb those words?"

Optional Video: Are My Desires Good or Bad?

Chapter 12: The Mind of God

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter 12 begins with Amanda being perplexed over how much she has received in heaven in comparison to what she gave. She puts the question to The One, and experiences walking into the mind of God. From his perspective, they each have given all—it’s a perfect symmetry. Yet our hurts cause us to fear the gift—in our experience, even roses have thorns. When Amanda begins comparing the trust required to embrace heaven to a computer simulation, they fortuitously come to a fork in the road, and she gets to practice navigating heaven by trust.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- When you looked into the mind of God with Amanda on pages 175-176, what grabbed you?

Discussion Questions

1. If you could look into the mind of God, what would you ask to see (pg. 175)?
 - a. What do you think of the “perfect symmetry” idea on page 176?
2. Theo ‘turned off his feelings and walked around like a zombie’ (bottom of pg. 179). Can you identify?
 - a. What led up to that? How did you get out of that state?
3. On page 181, Amanda compares trust to drinking from the tap or sitting on a chair. What other examples can we come up with of trust as an unnoticed part of everyday life?
 - a. Why is trust such an important theme when it comes to heaven?
 - b. Where have you been challenged to embrace trusting in place of knowing?
4. On page 184, Amanda talks about ‘knowing as we are fully known’ as referring to the ‘method of perception.’ What does she mean?
 - a. Do you like or dislike the idea that The One will always be a mystery? Why?

Imagination Exercise: The Mind of God (Pen and Paper Needed)

Instructions: *“We can enter into the mind of God while we are still on earth, too. So let’s try it out! Close your eyes, and just be still inside. Now, imagine yourself standing before The Maker in heaven. He is all made of light, love beaming out of him, and you are soaking in his affection.”*

Wait a moment, then continue: *“Visualize handing him your soul—the best, dearest part of you. Your identity is in your hands, and you extend them forward, offering your heart to him.”*

Wait a moment, then continue. *“Now, ask him to respond. ‘Creator, what do you love about my gift? What do you want to give me in return?’”* Give people a minute or two to be in that place.

1. “Take a minute and jot down whatever you saw, heard or sensed. Don’t judge it or try to figure it out—for now, just jot down what came into your mind and heart.”
2. Have the group share what came to them.

Optional Video: Why is Trust so Important?

Chapter 13: Secrets

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

"In Chapter 13, Amanda learns there are no secrets in heaven. You can have whole conversations there without speaking aloud. Tapping into the memory of God, Amanda watches Jesus meet John the Baptist as a boy—and realizes that thinking of Jesus as human baby is a new (and funny!) thought to her. The Man of Light is a big proponent of fun, teaching Amanda to sky-walk and then sky-dive with no parachute. Finally, they discuss the hints of heaven hidden on earth, like how authenticity foreshadows the transparency of heaven."

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What's one line that you particularly enjoyed in Chapter 13?

Discussion Questions

1. What's your favorite topic in this chapter, and why? [Go around the circle and discuss.]
2. What would it feel like if people could see your thoughts (pg. 187)? How about in heaven, where there is nothing you have to be ashamed of?
3. If you had access to all the info in God's mind, what would you want to know (pg. 189)?
 - a. If you could relive The Man of Light's growing up years through his own eyes, like on pages 190-191, what episodes would you want to replay?
 - b. Are you used to thinking of Jesus as a child (pg. 192-193)? Why or why not?
4. Do you like the idea of skydiving in heaven (pg. 196)? What are you scared to do on earth that you'd try in heaven if you knew the Man of Light would be there to catch you?
5. 'Eternity never laughed so hard as it did after humans began running around on two legs' (pg. 202). What do we humans do that you think God finds hilarious?

Imagination Exercise: Jesus as a Kid

Instructions: *"We're going to try to envision Jesus as a kid. Whatever you think of in answer to these questions, take a moment to form a picture of it in your mind:"*

- *"What kind of 'kid things' must he have done that you've never thought of?"*
- *"What experiences from YOUR childhood might have happened to him, too?"*
- *"What are some 'firsts' in the life of a child? Let's Imagine The Man of Light in those moments."*

Highlight the Extra Resources

Take a moment to familiarize people with the resources on page 347-348:

- Have a painful life experience rewritten by our Heaven's Perspective story team.
- Explore videos by the author on the www.HeavenExperience.net web site.
- Become a partner and get free books to give away to seekers and the suffering.
- Pay it forward by donating on our Give-Send-Go page.

Optional Video: Physical and Spiritual Laws: Which are Binding?

Chapter 14: Nourishment

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

"In Chapter 14, Amanda discovers that The Man of Light can be in multiple places at once—and so can she! Then they come across a berry patch, and she discovers food in heaven—fruit that is pure life, requires no digestive processes and produces no waste. Eating in heaven is for satisfaction, not survival. It's like prayer: God doesn't need us to ask since he already knows what we need: he just enjoys hearing us say it in our own words. Then a new sight approaches—a flash mob that has gathered to experience joy. Amanda and Theo are carried away in ecstasy as they dance, float and fly with the crowd."

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What's a detail about food in heaven that you'd never thought of before?

Discussion Questions

1. What idea in this chapter most captivated you? [Go around the circle and discuss.]
2. What do you think of the Man of Light being in more than one place at a time (pg. 205)?
 - a. How does that explain omnipresence? That God has time to listen to all our prayers (pg. 210)?
3. What would it be like to eat for satisfaction instead of survival in heaven (pg. 210)?
 - a. If eating was created for satisfaction, does that explain why dieting is so hard on earth (pg. 207)?
 - b. What foods do you think will have counterparts in heaven (pg. 209)?
4. What experiences on earth are most like being in the 'joy mob' (pg. 211-213)?

Imagination Exercise: Flash Mobs (pg. 211)

Instructions: *"We're going to envision a heavenly flash mob, just around a different emotion. Instead of joy, it could be gratitude, excitement, belonging, peace, awe, hope, contentment—anything we can think of! Then we'll brainstorm about what a group of people in heaven who were experiencing that emotion together would look like."*

1. Pick an emotion
2. Brainstorm: What's something you do by yourself on earth to express that feeling?
3. How have you experienced it best in groups?
4. If that experience was a dim reflection of heaven, what might heaven be like?

Optional Video: Is Jesus in Two Places at Once?

Chapter 15: The River

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter 15 begins with Amanda seeing the River of Life up close for the first time. Jumping in, she discovers the electric sensation of being immersed in life—although it takes her a while to realize she can talk under water. The River has the quality of making everything more alive—including the Man of Light—through the mathematics of love. And looking out through the water reveals the intrinsic oneness of heaven: you see connections instead of individual objects. This paradox leads Theo to explain how The One employs paradox: using two lesser truths to unveil the mystery in a third.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s one quality of the River of Life that you found interesting?

Discussion Questions

1. What in this chapter would you like to talk about? [Go around the circle and discuss.]
2. If you came across a crystal-clear river like this where you could breathe under water—what would you want to do in it (pg. 216-220)?
 - a. On page 217, Amanda feels wildly alive in the River. When have you felt most alive? Why?
 - b. How would you play in that river if you were a kid again (pg. 220)?
3. ‘What do you get for the God who has everything? The one thing in all the universe he wants but doesn’t have—your heart’ (pg. 223 para. 3) How does that line impact you?
 - a. If it was really true that he longs for you, he wants you more than anything...how would that change how you think about yourself?
4. What intrigues you about the unity of all things in heaven on pages. 224-226?
5. Discuss how the book approaches the problem of suffering on page 228-229.
 - a. How about the paradox of free will and predestination (pg. 229)?

Imagination Exercise: The Oneness of Heaven

Instructions: *“Let’s imagine together that our group has the oneness of heaven—that there are invisible bonds connecting us that the Water of Life reveals. I’m going to read a passage from the book. Close your eyes, and try to visualize the connections it is talking about.”*

1. Read aloud the italicized parts of paragraphs two and three on page 225, starting with, *“When I look through the lens of the water of life...”* Then give people a minute to **visualize** it.
2. “Keep your eyes closed as I read the passage again, and this time try to **FEEL** the connections between us.” Read aloud the same two paragraphs, then give people a minute to **feel**.
3. Discuss: What did the connections between us look and feel like? How did that picture impact your heart?

Optional Video: Free Will and Determinism

Chapter 16: The Great Ones

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter 16 we meet two of the Great Ones: an Ethiopian mother and her autistic child. Between sips of heaven’s wine, Amanda and Theo learn their story—how Abeda was rejected by her father and her village, yet her mother gave up belonging and status to rescue and raise her. In heaven, where that pair can speak and feel and remember everything they were unable to on earth, all that was lost is restored 100-fold. Amanda asks about destiny in heaven, and Theo explains how he is a curator in the Hall of Memories, creating exhibits that show off great moments of sacrifice and love. They agree that Jesus will introduce Amanda to the City from the outside, then Theo will give her a tour of the museum.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s one line or one idea you loved in this chapter?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think children with autism, Down’s syndrome, or other disabilities will be like in heaven (pg. 237)? Why?
2. On page 236 Abeda states, ‘It’s difficult in the Beautiful Land to tell the color of one’s skin, when the content of our character blazes out with such overpowering brilliance.’ How does heaven make racial injustice well? (See also pg. 240.)
3. Who did you *used to* think would be great in heaven? If greatness is actually measured by love, not accomplishment, who do you know that will be great in heaven (pg. 237-239)?
 - a. What do YOU do that will only be rewarded in heaven?
4. What’s one great sacrifice you’ve made for love in your life?
 - a. Have each person share a great sacrifice and get a response from the group: how do you think heaven will reward that sacrifice?
5. Do you have any clues now as to what your destiny in heaven might be (pg. 241)?

Imagination Exercise: The Day of the Lord

Instructions: *On page 238, Theo explains that everyone gets to heaven on the same day—the Day of the Lord. Since heaven runs on a totally different time system than earth, when we die and step out of earth time, we arrive in the Eternal Now—where it’s always the same day! What would that mean:*

- For meeting your kids and grandkids?
- Your ancestors?
- For miscarried babies, or loved ones who’ve died untimely deaths?

Optional Video: God’s Crazy Reward System

Chapter 17: Rules and Regrets

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter 17, Amanda learns from a passing comedy club that rules have come to nought in heaven: there are none. The reason is found in an Eddie Murphy movie: that Jesus wants to marry for love, not obedience. Then Theo teaches her to experience the moment, to feel the wind flow across her skin, to tune into its caress. Amanda realizes as she contemplates her hair (it’s longer now) how much she sacrificed for efficiency and productivity, and how heaven cares for her more than she cared for herself. The Man of Light enjoys deferring to us: he paid a big price for our freedom, so he enjoys watching us unwrap the gift! Then Amanda catches her first glimpse of the Great City.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s one line you highlighted in this chapter? Why?

Discussion Questions

1. What topic in this chapter would you like to hear others opinions on?
2. Theo says on page 246 (para. 7), “The Children of Light do not obey God in heaven.” What do you think of THAT statement?
 - a. What would it be like to have no rules you had to live by or live up to, and yet everything turned out well just the same?
3. What types of humor will live on in heaven (pg. 246-247)? What won’t?
4. On page 249 paragraph 8, Theo says, “Many of our best tales are about The Man of Light.” What other stories or movies have a plot like his life?
5. What hobbies, pleasures or self-care activities have you given up for efficiency’s sake (pg. 252 para. 3)? What does it say about The One that he gives those back in heaven?
 - a. What’s one way that God has cared for you more than you cared for yourself?
6. If Jesus defers to you sometimes on earth the way he does to Theo in heaven, how might that change the way you live (pg. 253 para. 6)?

Imagination Exercise: Our Heaven Encounters

1. Have you ever dreamed you were in heaven? Had an NDE (Near Death Experience) where you ‘died’ in a medical emergency and went to heaven? Tell the group about it!
2. What was the closest experience you’ve had on earth to being in heaven? What made it heavenly?
3. Do you know someone personally who has visited heaven? What was their story?

Optional Video: Destiny in Heaven

Chapter 18: Time & Justice

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter 18 begins with a question: will you get bored in heaven? By reliving a moment, Jesus shows Amanda that all times are present in the Eternal Now of heaven, nothing passes away, and each moment constantly grows new layers of meaning. In the Great Lawn of heaven’s time, any moment you visualize becomes your present. Causality is the offspring of one-dimensional time—it’s what allows independent selves with free will on earth. Yet it also brings suffering into being: there can be no independence or free choice without it. So pain is a necessary byproduct of creation, and The Three endured great suffering and loss to bring a universe into being that can spawn love.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s a line in this chapter that made you do a double-take?

Discussion Questions

1. What’s one insight or new thought you got out of this chapter? [Go around the circle.]
2. Ever wondered if you’d get bored or run out of stuff to do in heaven (pg. 259)?
 - a. What do you think of heaven’s answer on page 262?
3. If time was like the lawn on page 263-264, and you could revisit any moment in the entire span of your existence whenever you want...what moment would YOU visit first?
 - a. What’s it feel like to try to wrap your mind around a concept like this?
4. On the bottom of page 269, Amanda says, ‘You gave up an existence where only good was possible, for the greater good of having us’ How does that strike you?
 - a. What questions do you have about the ‘problem of suffering?’
5. On page 271, Amanda wonders if God has a need to punish evil. Jesus replies that heaven’s justice is about forgiveness and restoration, not ‘an eye for an eye.’
 - a. Is that the kind of God you’d like to be associated with?
 - b. Is forgiveness really the closest thing to heaven’s justice on earth? How?

Imagination Exercise: A Conversation about Justice

Instructions: *“After talking with Jesus about the restoration of the mother and child, Amanda says on page 273: ‘Now that’s real justice. Everything put right, yet without punishment, anger, revenge, or regret. What I always wanted but could never articulate.’ Close your eyes, quiet your heart, and have a conversation with the Man of Light about that statement. Ask him whatever you want to, and give yourself permission to receive what comes into your mind and heart in response as The Voice. Here’s a question to start with: ‘Jesus, what’s an example of how you’ve brought justice without punishment in my life?’”*

1. Give people three to five minutes to meditate.
2. Take a couple minutes to jot down what you saw, heard or sensed.
3. Share it with the group

Optional Video: Heaven’s Justice

Chapter 19: The City of God

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter 19 Amanda describes the landscape of heaven. First, she beholds the shining River, the Children of Light scattered in it like stars, and a copy of the Man of Light with each group of children. Above it the city rises like a mountain, the physical representation of the life connections between us. At the very pinnacle is a cascading waterfall where the River flows out from the high seat of The One, the brilliant epicenter of heaven. And within the light is music. Surrounding the fountain is a crystal sea, within an encircling colonnade. Each arch represents a legacy, a family tree of heaven. Inside are the Trees of Life. The River flows through every level of the city, then out through the gates—which are never shut, since no evil exists to bring any harm within.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- Where did you experience wonder or awe in the description of The City?

Discussion Questions

1. What about The City do you want to discuss? [Go around the circle.]
2. The City is a home, where everyone has a place, all are special, all belong, and all are loved. What do you think it would be like to come to your true home?
 - a. Would you rather we each have a room in heaven’s one great house (pg. 279), or separate, single-family mansions all our own? Why?
 - b. Amanda hears Beethoven on page 282. What human music might play in heaven?
3. Where in the city would you want to hang out? What would you experience there?
 - a. If you are a city person—what do you love about living in a city?
4. What most moves you about the description of the seat of The One (pg. 280-282)?
5. Have you ever thought about Jesus feeling unknown on earth—that no one really understood him (pg. 285)?
 - a. How does that idea impact your heart? Ever feel that yourself?

Imagination Exercise: The Center

Instructions: *“We’re going to ask The Man of Light to give us some more details about the city, either in words, pictures or feelings. We’ll read a section from the book, then close our eyes and ask for more. Give yourself permission to believe that what comes into your heart and mind is really The Voice!”*

1. Read the last paragraph on pg. 169 and the first three on page 170 (you can either read them aloud or have everyone read from their copy of the book).
2. Ask: *“Hey, Man of Light: what other details of the city do you want to tell us about? Is there anything we’ve experienced on earth that can give us a window into this?”*
3. Meditate for several minutes
4. Take a couple minutes to jot down what you saw or heard, then discuss it as a group.

Optional Video: The New Heaven and New Earth

Chapter 20: Hall of Memories

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter 20 introduces Amanda to a series of exhibits her father built to commemorate great acts of forgiveness. The first was Saint Monica, who forgave and released her disappointment of a son, and through trust saw Augustine return to his home and his God. Kathryn the prayer genealogist shares how she grew up in a remote peasant village, yet touched people all over the world through prayer; and how her fame in heaven grew from her obscurity on earth. And they meet Ethan, who chose trust when the girl he loved got engaged to another, creating a different beauty. Amanda learns that God gives to us all out of proportion to our labors because it brings us together—and with an infinite supply, why not?”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s one quality of a character introduced in this chapter that caught your eye?

Discussion Questions

1. What about the Hall of Memories intrigued you? [Go around the circle and discuss.]
2. What is a key place in your life where you’ve chosen forgiveness and trust instead of hatred or retribution?
 - a. What do you think the curators in the Hall will make out of that (pg. 290)?
 - b. Who do YOU know who should be in the Hall of Memories? Why?
 - c. Sum it up: what does heaven do with betrayal and loss?
3. How did the story of St. Monica and Augustine on pages 291-294 impact your heart?
 - a. How about Kathryn, the prayer genealogist, on pages 295-299?
 - b. How about Ethan (pg. 300)?
4. Is there a special person in your life who often prayed for you? What do you think was the result of those prayers?

Imagination Exercise: The Exhibit of You

Instructions: *“Take a place in your life where you forgave even though it was difficult. Now, try to imagine that experience as an exhibit in the Hall of Memories. Feel free and take details from the exhibits in the book, or make up your own. What words and actions would be part of the display? What would the onlookers see that you had overcome, and how?”*

1. Give people a few minutes to imagine their exhibit.
2. Say, *“Now imagine The Man of Light walks up to the exhibit of your life, a huge smile on his face, and puts an arm around your shoulder. What does he say to you? How do those words impact your heart?”*
3. Take 60 seconds to absorb the moment.
4. Have people share what was significant in this imagination exercise.

Optional Video: Suffering and Glory

Chapter 21: Mom

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

*“In Chapter 21 Amanda sees the long-hidden story behind her parents’ divorce. She watches her father choose to let go of anger, trust, and simply go to bed, allowing the Man of Light to make something beautiful of what happened. Yet evils will finally end. They will be *Damnatio Memoriae*: erased from memory.*

“Then Amanda discovers her mother refused the invitation to heaven. The soul is not immortal on its own; so without the life of The One, her mom’s flame has gone out. Jesus could not have rescued her without destroying her free will. Instead, he honored that gift to the end. Her final request has been granted, and Amanda learns that in the fullness of heaven there is no grief over it.”

Discussion Questions

[NOTE: At the heart/emotional brain level, many readers will like the idea that there is no eternal conscious torment, because it feels more like the caring God they know personally. But if they think that eternal punishment is the only valid biblical stance, their rational side will object! You might want to tell your group something like, “*This chapter explores one view of what happens to those who don’t choose heaven. We don’t all need to agree—this is simply an opportunity to explore the question. If at the end of our discussion you don’t buy this view, that’s totally fine.*”]

1. What did your heart experience when you read about Amanda’s mom?
 - a. Are your heart and head in the same place with her fate (pg. 311)? Why?
 - b. In your heart, do you *want* God to be this gracious, but aren’t sure he *can* be?
2. Discuss Amanda’s answer to the question, “Why?” on page 303, and Jesus’s on page 316.
3. On page 314, Jesus states that the human soul is not immortal on its own—to live on, we must be reborn with God’s life in place of our own (pg. 314). What do you think?
 - a. If the soul is not immortal, does it make sense that The One would resurrect people and keep them alive with his own life just to punish them eternally?
 - b. Jesus says he did everything to rescue Amanda’s mom—and forcing her to come to heaven it would have destroyed her (pg. 317). Is that a satisfying answer?
4. On page 308, The Man of Light looks forward to when evil will be erased from existence. How is eternity different if evil no longer even exists?

Imagination Exercise: The One as Parent

Instructions: *“In this exercise, we’re going to tap into our own experiences of parenting and being parented to get a window into the heart of The One. His experience of family is like ours!”*

1. Read slowly: *“Close your eyes, and imagine The One as a parent, raising children, loving them, and then letting them choose what to do with their freedom. Some kids take his advice, and some flip him off, just to prove their independence. Some keep in touch; others never call. Sometimes they’re grateful for what he’s sacrificed for them, and sometimes they don’t even notice.*
“Where have you experienced that as a parent or child? When a memory bubbles up, ask The One, “What do you want to show me about how you feel in situations like this?”
2. After a few minutes of silence, discuss what you heard, saw or sensed.

Optional Video: The End of Evil

Chapter 22: The Center

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

"In Chapter 22, Amanda comes to the colonnade surrounding the dwelling place of The One, at the very center—yet a Burning One prevents her from entering. Before a golden bowl casting moving patterns of light on the ceiling, Jesus tells Amanda she must go back. Return to earth, just as The Man of Light did in The Great Disrobing, when he removed his heavenly dimensions and fell to earth. And although it will be painful, he trusts her to trust him in it 'Alright. I will do it,' Amanda says. 'But I'd really, really like a hug right now.' Her final question is why she was chosen...to which Jesus reveals that being chosen in heaven isn't about comparison—she was chosen as all are chosen, because she is special to The Maker."

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What struck you about the golden bowl?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you most want to discuss about Amanda's final moments in heaven?
 - a. How did you feel when the angel stopped Amanda (pg. 323)? When she learned she had to return to earth (pg. 326)?
 - b. What would it be like to get used to heaven and then have to leave it (pg. 327)?
2. What surprised you in the vision of The Man of Light coming to earth (pg. 328-330)?
 - a. Have you ever pondered the sacrifice of the incarnation before? What did it cost Jesus to strip himself and come down?
 - b. (For people with disabilities): What insight does your disability give you into The Man of Light removing his dimensions to come to earth (pg. 328-329)?
3. Jesus tells Amanda on page 334 that some of what she saw was a human portrait of heaven, seen from earth's side of the mirror. If heaven is really a better, more mind-bending, lovelier experience than even this book portrays...what then?

Imagination Exercise: How Does Heaven See Me?

Instructions: *"We're going to put ourselves into the scene when Jesus praises Amanda on page 184. Close your eyes, and let The Man of Light speak these words to YOUR heart."*

1. Read slowly: *"Jesus takes both of Amanda's hands in his, and exclaims, 'My Amanda! You are beautiful, swift in insight, wise in the ways of trust. And you carry the light of heaven in your eyes. I see before me creation as it was always meant to be. [PAUSE.] Then he turns to you. You stand on the threshold of the dwelling of The One, the gateway to the great fountain. Smiling, Jesus takes both your hands and looks deeply into your eyes. Now imagine he is speaking to you personally. What greatness does he see in you? What does he praise? Why is he happy with who you are?"*
2. Give some time to listen; then each person shares what they imagined him saying.

Optional Video: The Cost of Coming to Earth

Chapter 23: Awake

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Amanda awakens to a great confusion in Chapter 23. Something has changed. The light hurts her eyes. The sound of distant music is gone, as is the scent of heaven. And then an unfamiliar sensation: pain. And fear. Everything is different. Someone enters the room: a nurse. She’s in a hospital. On earth. Amanda calls out to The Man of Light, but he doesn’t come. And then, faint and faraway, she hears The Voice. A black stone appeared in her hand, with a familiar message: “Step off the edge; and I will catch you.” She lets go, and it disappears.

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What detail of waking up back on earth caught your attention?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you want to discuss about Amanda’s return to earth?
2. How does the start of this chapter on page 339 parallel the beginning of Chapter One on pages 1-2? What do they have in common?
3. How does Amanda feel when she wakes up? How would you feel in her position?
 - a. Have you ever been under anesthesia? What was waking up like?
 - b. What does Amanda lose when she returns to earth (pg. 340)?
 - c. Why did The Man of Light send her a black stone (pg. 342)? What did it mean?
4. How is The Voice different on earth versus heaven (pg. 342)? Do you experience that?
5. How do you feel about this journey to heaven coming to an end?

Optional Video: How to Hear The Voice

Epilogue

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“It is months after her trip to heaven, and Jamarcus is nailing down the final details of Amanda’s account of the journey. They talk about what has changed in her since her visit, and Amanda cites ‘losing her ambition’ as one of the main outcomes—that she is called to love her neighbor, not change the world. And then The One gives Jamarcus a taste of heaven.”

Discussion Questions

1. What was your favorite part of the book?
 - a. What did you enjoy about the characters Amanda and Theo?
 - b. How is your view of heaven different than when you started Chapter One?
 - c. What did you learn about the Man of Light, The Voice and The One?
2. What changed in you internally as you studied heaven?
 - a. On pages 344-345, Amanda says that her visit to heaven took away her fear of trust, her bitterness about her past, and her ambition to prove her worth by changing the world. Have any of those things happened in you as you read?
 - b. What difference does it make in how you want to live from now on to have such a vivid picture of heaven?

Imagination Exercise: Talking to The Man of Light

Instructions: “I’m going to read an excerpt from the epilogue, where Jamarcus got a taste of heaven. What I want you to do is feel it: put yourself into the scene, as if you were there, and let it impact you.”

1. Read aloud paragraphs 3-4 of the Epilogue, starting with, *“Suddenly, for the tiniest instant...”*
2. *“Take a minute just to absorb that image.”*
3. After a minute of silence, discuss what you felt and experienced.

Wrap-up (5-10 minutes)

Pages 347 and 348 list additional resources for getting to know The Man of Light or passing on what you’ve received to others. Take a few minutes to review them together.

1. Would we like to do a *Question for Jesus* experience next, to deepen our conversation with The Man of Light?
2. If your group received free or reduced-price copies of the book: what if we paid that gift forward?
 - a. We could: donate the cost of books for others, leave Amazon reviews, share our copies with friends, even do this book study with a new circle of friends.
 - b. What would you all like to do? [Go around the circle and discuss.]