



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>

Intro Video

Tips for Launching a Great Group

This outline is designed for anyone interested in heaven—truth seekers, Christian believers, avid readers, etc. The questions let you discuss the book in a way that is meaningful, whatever your audience. Many of the questions are heart-oriented, and encourage people to share at a deep level of feelings and desires. You may be surprised at how open your group becomes!

Some folks may find it easier to engage *The Heaven Experience* if they know how it connects with what was written 2000 years ago in the Bible. We’ve provided optional videos that discuss the scriptures linked with each chapter on the website at the link below. Because the videos are more ‘head’ oriented and analytical, we do not include them in the main outline. See www.HeavensPerspective.com/videos .

Facilitation Style

The key leading a great discussion is in the title: letting people *experience* heaven instead of analyzing it. The book is about heart, not head. So your job is not to be the heaven expert with all the right answers, but just to get people talking about what they’ve read and how it connects to their own hearts. You’ll know you are doing well when people start responding to each other’s comments and the discussion keeps going without your intervention!

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 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 a pace that fits your group. Each chapter has its own set of discussion questions, so you can easily adapt the material to fit your schedule

This guide contains more Discussion Questions and Imagination Exercises than you’ll cover in a group session, *especially* if you are doing three or four chapters a week. So pick and



choose what to cover as needed! 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

A general explanation of the things you'll do each week:

1. Accountability Questions

Each chapter has a short-answer question to provide **accountability** for that week's reading (everybody hates a book group where half the folks don't read!). 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. A basic accountability principle is 'give grace but don't lower the standard.' If a person hasn't done the reading, we still want them to come and participate. We don't punish them. BUT—if someone hasn't read the chapters, follow up by asking: "When can you put it in your calendar for next week?" Then ask them to schedule it right then! It's a positive way to help instead of getting frustrated, and offers some assurance things will be better next week.

Every chapter includes an accountability question, but you only need to do ONE of them at the start of each meeting.

2. Optional Triads

Use breakout groups of three if you have nine or more participants, so the accountability question is more effective and takes less time. Engaging certain discussion questions or imagination exercises in triads can also give everyone more of a chance to share. Start each week with an accountability question in triads (it works best if the groups stay the same through the course).

3. 30-Second Overview

Reading this short summary refreshes everyone's memory of that chapter.

4. Imagination Exercises

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

5. Discussion Questions

This is the meat of the group time. The first question usually asks people what they want to talk about—spend some time discussing each person's interest. Additional questions are provided to deepen the discussion; probably more than you will need. You don't need to cover them all! People get the most out of the time when they are talking about what *they* want to discuss.

6. Italics

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

7. Pay it Forward

There are two places in the outline (the middle and the end) where people are encouraged to do something to bring *The Heaven Experience* to others. If you've received free- or reduced-cost materials, it's because someone else made that possible for you! Point people to the last few pages of the book, where there is a list of things anyone can do to learn more or share with others.



Schedules

This book has a lot to talk about! Below are three schedule options, for covering two-, three-, or four chapters a week. Pick one and write your meeting dates into the “Date” column.

Twelve Week Schedule

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

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

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

At Your First Meeting...

Housekeeping (5 min)

(This week has more instructions at the beginning because we are just starting.)

- 1) Pass out schedules or mark the dates on your BOOKMARKS.
- 2) *“Reminder: if you binge and read the whole thing at once, no problem! But please go back and reread the two chapters the week we are talking about them.”*
- 3) **Ground Rules.** Ask the group for assent on each: *“Is this a rule we can agree 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 here to *experience* heaven, not to argue theology and doctrine. If we get off track, any one of us can call us back.
 - d. Heaven is beyond understanding: there is no one ‘right’ answer. We can disagree and its perfectly okay.
 - e. Make your own rule: _____
- 4) Play the “Meet the Author” video at [\[\[URL\]\]]([[URL]])

OPTIONAL: If You Are Using Triads (15 min)

Groups of nine or more will want to **set up triads** which will continue 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.
2. **Build a culture** (create shared ownership for basic group expectations):
 - a. Ask, “What expectations do we want to have of each other for this study?”
 - b. Participants may voice desires for timeliness, honesty, consistent attendance, not dominating the discussion, etc.
 - c. When a person voices a worthwhile expectation, ask for verbal assent from the group: “Is that something we want to commit to?”
3. **Ask the triad question** in your groups of three: “What’s one detail of Amanda’s journey down the hall that changes how you think about heaven?”
 - a. **If Someone didn’t do the reading:** Peers ask: “When do you plan to do it this coming week?” Put it in your calendar.

Chapter 1: Afterlife

30-Second Summary (read this aloud)

“The Introduction supplies the central dilemma of the book: to truly understand heaven, you need extra-dimensional senses and language. It’s impossible to tell heaven’s story with only the eyes and the language of earth. So the goal is not getting everything about heaven right, 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’s 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 curiosity is both a gift and a defense mechanism.”

Accountability Question

The first question each week is to show if people did the reading. If someone didn’t do the reading, ask, *“When can you put it in your calendar for this coming week?”* And they schedule it right then! Do in each group session

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

Discussion Questions

1. On page [] 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. [If people start to get lost in figuring it out, you can ask, “Is that an experiencing heaven question or a figuring it out question?”]
2. What do you want to talk about today? [Go around the circle. Discuss each thing.]
3. What do you think your first moments after death will be like?
4. What would it be like to live in a place where it is impossible to be afraid? Where everything you looked at told you its story?
5. What do you identify with in Amanda as a character?
 - a. Her curiosity? Her need to know? Her relationship with her dad?
 - b. What does losing her watch symbolize? Would you like to lose yours?

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 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 a sentence or two, what's one cool thing about heaven from this chapter?

Discussion Questions

1. What questions do you have or what do you want to discuss about dimensions?
2. What's one thing that excites you about how time works in heaven?
 - a. What would it be like to be able to go back and relive any fond memory, in living color? What memories would you want to relive?
 - b. To be off the clock, have no deadlines, never have to wear a watch?
3. How does it feel to be desired (pg. 21)? What does that do for your heart?
4. How have you experienced The Voice and the Man of Light in your own life?
 - a. What do you think of how they are portrayed here? How is this different/better than the way you have seen God in the past (pg. 22-23)?
5. What part of the story of the forming of earth and the coming of the Man of Light spoke to your heart?
 - a. What do the different parts of the analogy (the blackness, the first couple, etc.) mean to you?

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

1. 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.”*
2. Read out loud the section in Chapter Three where The Voice is revealed in three 'I AM's.' (pg. 22)
3. Take a few minutes afterward for people to jot down thoughts or images that came to them.
4. Have people share what came to them.

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 inward, 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?
- *"Reminder: if you've already read the whole book, no problem! But please come back and reread the chapters we are covering that week."*

Discussion Questions

- 1) What part of Amanda's doubts, fears or grief do you identify with? Why?
- 2) What do you think of the concept of "life being supported by biology but originating with a touch from The Light" (pg. 24)?
 - a. How about, "the cosmos is a person and her inside it" (pg .26)?
 - b. Or love as the gravity of heaven (pg. 27)?
- 3) Amanda realizes her thinking on earth has been 'fuzzy, infinitely distractable, non-linear' (pg. 28). When have you felt like that? What would it be like if you were suddenly able to think without distraction or obstacles?
- 4) What do you think and feel as you come to the very edge of heaven with Amanda?
 - a. What are you anticipating?

Imagination Exercise: The Edge (Pen and Paper Needed)

1. *"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"*
2. Have people close their eyes, and visualize the scene as you read the 2nd through the 6th paragraph under the heading "The Edge".
3. Then ask, *"Man of Light, what details do you want to give us to add to this picture?"*
4. Give people two minutes of silence
5. Say, *"Jot down whatever you heard, saw, sensed or what came into your mind."*
6. After a couple more minutes, 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 being known 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 Amanda’s meeting with the Man of Light? (pg. 38)

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 32, 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.” When have you felt like that? What did you lose?
 - a. What actually helped you grieve in that moment, and what didn’t?
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 (pg. 32). Out of it, Amanda created a defense mechanism to avoid future pain: being a good girl. What’s a painful experience like that you had early in life?
 - a. What defense mechanism did you take on there?
 - b. If The Voice spoke to your heart right now like he did to Amanda’s, what would he say to you about that story?
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. 35)
 - a. What’s the unanswerable question ‘why’ you’ve asked in your pain? What happened when you asked it?
5. What happened in your heart when Amanda flung herself off the cliff and the Man of Light caught her on the wings of Hope?

Optional Video: What is the Narrow Way?

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)

- In a sentence, what’s one detail of heaven that stood out to you in the reading?

Discussion Questions

1. What would you like to talk about from Chapter Five? [Go around the circle, and discuss each topic]
2. Have you ever had a ‘flying dream?’ What was it like?
 - a. What would you do if you could fly?
3. Despair was ‘lodged like a gallstone in Amanda’s soul’ (pg. 42), and she held on to it to protect her heart from being hurt. Have you every done that—held onto anger or fear to protect yourself?
 - a. How did that work out?
 - b. Have you ever had despair turn into hope? What happened?
4. What do you think of the idea that water on earth is like water in heaven, and not vice versa?
 - a. What else was interesting to you about water in heaven?
5. How have you imagined God being praised in heaven? What does the book change about your picture?

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: how about music, art, or poetry?”*
- *“Everyday things we love: coffee, chocolate, pets, etc?”*
- *“Things that make us who we are: Memories, names, 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 most touched your heart in this chapter? Where did you identify with Amanda’s journey? [Go around the circle, and discuss each topic]
2. Have you ever wondered why God doesn’t just show up on earth and right every wrong? What do you think of how the book treats this question?
3. Amanda jokes that The Man of Light is in a ‘witness protection program for deities’ (pg. 48). 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?
 - b. What did you think of the *Princess Bride* analogy?
4. Had it occurred to you before that making humans was a risk for The Creator? How does that thought impact you?
5. What would it be like if your bad memories of negative events were washed away?
 - a. How would you be different if all the hurt, grief, fear, and anxiety were gone?

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

1. Instructions: *“In the Great Washing (pg. 54), 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 in our memories from the last couple weeks. Close your eyes, sit quietly for a few minutes, and let memories of the last couple weeks bubble up inside you. When a memory comes up, imagine The Man of Light entering it. Notice what he does or says when he shows up. What expression is on his face? What do you feel when you see him there?”* [Give people several minutes to experience this.]
2. *“Jot down what you saw or heard to 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.”*
3. *“Share one memory Jesus came into, what he did there, and how that made you feel.”*

Optional Video: The Court of Acquittal

Chapter 7: Reunion

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“In Chapter Seven, Amanda and The Man of Light alight 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)

- If you could travel at the speed of thought, where’s the first place you’d go?

Discussion Questions

1. What ideas from this chapter do you want to talk about? [go around the circle and discuss each topic]
2. How would the everyday world around you be different if every object was lit from within by its own inner light, and you didn’t need to turn on a light bulb to see?
3. Ever had a dream about heaven? What happened? What did it feel like?
4. Who would you want to meet in heaven like Amanda did—running across heaven’s lawn and falling into each other’s arms. Why that person?
 - a. What would you say?
 - b. If that person said the words you always longed to hear from them, what would they be? What would that feel like?
 - c. What question would you want to ask that you never knew the answer to?
5. What do you think of how heaven counts descendants?
 - a. Who will be your unexpected descent in heaven through a set of unusual circumstances?

Imagination Exercise: Looking in Your Eyes or imagine a reunion with a loved one

1. Instructions: *“What if the eye really was the window to the soul? We’re going to pair up, and just look each other steadily in the eye for 90 seconds. As you look, try to absorb who this person is, what they are like, what about them is loved.”*
2. Pair up (if there is an odd number, you sit out) and look in each other’s eyes.
3. Use a timer to give people 90 seconds.
4. Share: what do you see in this person? [you can do this one at a time in the whole group or in those same pairs]

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 that struck you as you read about it?

Discussion Questions

1. What aspect of the Great Reversal do you want to discuss today? [go around the circle]
2. What do you think of the idea that the garment of skin that separates us and makes communication difficult is 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?
3. If you could be a kid again in heaven, what’s one thing you’d do?
4. Let’s discuss the idea of the first and second death. What do you get out of the laptop analogy on pg. 71?
 - a. What would be different about your body if you were no longer dependent on biology to sustain your life? (i.e. you didn’t need food, digestion, intestines, or enzymes to power your cells?)

Imagination Exercise: God as Parent

1. 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.”*
2. Read the passage on page 72 where Theo talks about God as a parent with children who never call (Starting with ‘I hadn’t thought of this before...’ up until he stops speaking.)
3. Ask, *“What happens in you as you identify with The Maker in this?”*
 - a. How did it impact you to tune into the sacrifice he had to make to protect us from the evil in each other?

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?

Discussion Questions

1. Who is high on YOUR list of people you want to meet in heaven?
2. What fascinated you about art and artists in heaven?
 - a. If your body was able to perfectly execute what you see in your mind, what work of art might you want to create?
 - b. If you have a favorite medium (oils, watercolor, sculpture, etc.) how might it be different in heaven?
3. What would you like to discuss about Caspar and Theo? [go around the circle]
4. What do you love about how heaven made all things well between Caspar and Theo?
 - a. Where have you seen/you’d like to see that kind of redemption in your life?
5. What does Amanda have to let go of when she meets the worst offender of her life?
 - a. Could heaven really make things well between you and your worst offender?
 - b. What would you have to let go of if you met the safe, healed version of that person in heaven?
6. Discuss the idea of The Evil being jealous of women. What struck you there?

Imagination Exercise: The Garments of Heaven

Instructions: *“Imagine your heavenly destiny was weaving the clothes of heaven. You can do anything, and you have fabric with properties and capabilities beyond those of earth. Brainstorm together for a bit:*

- a. *“What features of clothes you’ve liked on earth would you incorporate?”*
- b. *“What materials would you use? What styles?”*
- c. *“What patterns would you incorporate in the weave?”*
- d. *“What could this garment do that ordinary clothes can’t?”*

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 Theo. And Amanda’s view of her daddy is forever changed.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What did you enjoy about Amanda’s meeting with Celeste?

Discussion Questions

1. Chapter Ten is about how earth is patterned after heaven, not vice versa. What would you like to talk about on that topic?
 - a. Can you think of some other ways earth might be patterned after heaven?
2. The Man of Light has an infinite number of moments within each moment, so he always has time for you (pg. 92). Did you ever wonder if you’d have to stand in line?
3. Theo says, “On earth we got jealous because there wasn’t enough to go around” (pg. 87). What would be different about life if you were always overflowing instead of sometimes empty?
4. How does it impact your heart when Jesus tells Theo how he sees him, and all of heaven roars out its affirmation, too?

Imagination Exercise: Affirmations (Pen and Paper Needed)

1. Instructions: *“On page 91, 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. Then we’ll each get to share with our partner.*
*“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’s a great inner quality do they display? Where 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!”
2. Pair up
3. Prepare: give people 3-5 minutes to think of some significant things to say
4. Each pair shares with each other
5. Ask people to respond to their partner: how did those words touch your 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 to fill the desires of our hearts, but becomes twisted when we attach it to something in this world. By way of example, Anastasia shares her own story of trying to find fulfillment in being a champion, 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.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What was fun or interesting about how this chapter pictures the Burning Ones?

Discussion Questions

1. What would you like to discuss in this chapter? [Go around the circle]
2. Do you think there are animals in heaven? What might they be like?
3. On page 96, Anastasia talks about how desire is a good thing, designed to draw us to The Maker—but it can become twisted when we believe some person or thing can fill our desire. How have you experienced pursuing something to fill your heart, but when you reach it doesn't do the trick?
4. How did Anastasia's story of the death and rebirth of her rose garden impact you?
5. What part of gardening in heaven appealed to you?
 - a. What would it look like if you could do your current job like Anastasia tends her garden—by simply speaking what you want to happen? Give examples!
 - b. What other good things would you do with that power?

Imagination Exercise: Who You Are

1. 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—that this is who YOU are!”*
2. Read two paragraphs on page 101 beginning with, “You are the offspring of God...”
3. When you are finished, say, *“Take a minute and absorb those words, and let them be true to your heart.”*
4. 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—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 learns to navigate by trust.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s it like to look into the mind of God?

Discussion Questions

1. What would you like to talk about in this chapter? [Go around the circle]
2. Can you identify with Theo when he ‘turned off his feelings and walked around like a zombie’ (pg. 107)? In brief, what led up to that? How did you get out of that state?
3. Amanda compares trust to drinking from the tap (pg. 108)—you believe it won’t make you sick without ever realizing that your action requires trust. How many other examples can we come up with that trust is part of our normal, everyday routine?
 - a. If trust is a much bigger part of life than you thought, what does that mean?
 - b. Why do you think trust and risk is an important theme in the book?
 - c. Where have you been challenged to embrace trusting in place of knowing?
4. On page 110, 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)

1. Instructions: *“We can enter into the mind of God while we are still on earth, too—it’s just not as effortless. 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.”*
2. Wait a moment, then continue: *“Visualize handing him your soul—the best, dearest part of you. Your identity is in your hands, and you are extending them, offering your heart to him.”*
3. 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?’”*
4. Give people a minute or two to be in that place.
5. *“Now, 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.”*
6. Share what came to you in the exercise.

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, and you can have whole conversations 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 liked in Chapter 13?

Discussion Questions

1. What would you like to talk about in this Chapter? [go around the circle and discuss]
2. What can you get from the mind of God that you can't learn on Google?
3. If you could relive The Man of Light's growing up years through his own eyes, what would you want to see?
 - a. What surprised you in this chapter about Jesus as a child?
 - b. What did you think of Jesus singing that part of a Christmas carol? (pg. 114)
4. Put yourself in Amanda's place as she's skydiving. What would it be like to do that with absolutely no fear and complete trust that The Man of Light would catch you?
5. "Eternity never laughed so hard as it did after humans began running around on two legs." What do you think of that picture?

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 picture it in your mind:*

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

Highlight the Extra Resources

Take a moment to direct people to the resources on the last few pages of the book.

"There are opportunities there to deepen your conversation with The Man of Light by using Questions for Jesus or have a painful event from your life personally rewritten from Heaven's Perspective. You can also explore videos by the author or learn more about the Heaven Experience from the web site.

"And if you've received a free or reduced-price copy of the book, you can pay it forward so others can receive the same gift. And we'd love for you to leave an Amazon review so more people find this book!"

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; 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 the dance, float and fly with the crowd.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What’s struck you about the flash mob?

Discussion Questions

1. What in this chapter caught your attention that you want to discuss? [go around the circle]
2. What do you think of the Man of Light being in more than one place at a time?
 - a. How does that explain omnipresence? That God has time to listen to all our prayers?
3. What appeals to you about food in heaven?
 - a. If we were made to eat for satisfaction instead of survival...does that give you any insight into why dieting is so hard?
 - b. What foods do you think will have counterparts in heaven?
4. What have you experienced on earth that is most like the ‘joy mob’?

Imagination Exercise: Flash Mobs

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? What might it look like in heaven?
3. What are some examples of groups on earth that are experiencing this emotion? What would that look like in heaven?

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 two lesser truths to reveal a third that can only be perceived as paradox.”

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

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

Discussion Questions

1. What in this chapter would you like to talk about? [go around the circle]
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?
 - a. How would you play in that river if you were a kid again?
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!” How does that line impact you?
4. What intrigues you about the unity of all things in heaven (pg. 131-132)?
5. Discuss how the book approaches the problem of suffering on page 133.
 - a. How about the paradox of free will and predestination?

Imagination Exercise: The Oneness of Heaven

1. 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.”*
2. Read aloud the two paragraphs on pg. 130, starting with, ‘But when I look through the lens of the water of life...’ Then give people a minute to visualize.
3. Instructions 2: *“Keep your eyes closed as I read the passage again, and this time try to FEEL the connections between us.”*
4. Read aloud the same two paragraphs, then give people a minute to feel.
5. Discuss: What did the connections between us look and feel like? How did that 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 something you admire about Lelise and Abeda?

Discussion Questions

1. What in this chapter would you like to discuss in depth? [go around the circle]
2. Who (or what groups) do you think are unrecognized on earth but will be great in heaven?
3. What’s one great sacrifice you’ve made for love in your life?
 - a. What would it be like for you to have the kind of companionship Abeda and Lelise had with that individual?
 - b. The rest of you—how do you think heaven will reward that? [Go around the circle and have each person share a great sacrifice and get a response from the group.]
4. Why doesn’t skin color matter in heaven?

Imagination Exercise: The Day of the Lord

Instructions: *On page 137, Theo explains that everyone gets to heaven on the same day—the Day of the Lord. Since heaven is an Eternal Now, and runs on a totally different time system than earth, when we die and step out of earth time, we all arrive in heaven on the same day. What would that mean:*

- *For your kids and grandkids?*
- *Your ancestors?*
- *For miscarried babies, or loved ones who’ve died untimely deaths?*
- *How would it feel to those in heaven?*

Optional Video: God’s Crazy Reward System

Chapter 17: Rules and Regrets

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“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 it’s caress. Amanda realizes as she contemplates her hair (its longer now) how much she sacrificed for efficiency and productivity, and how heaven cares for her more than she cared for herself. In the same way, The Man of Light enjoys deferring to us because 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 detail from this chapter that you liked?

Discussion Questions

1. What in this chapter would you like to discuss in depth? [go around the circle]
2. Theo says on pg. 141, “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. Do you ever just sit still and feel the wind blow over you? What sensations do you have?
4. What do you feel when you realize that once you are in heaven there is no way to do anything wrong, and no other place you can go?
5. What’s a way that God has cared for you more than you cared for yourself? How did that touch you? (go around the circle)

Imagination Exercise: Heaven Experiences

1. Have you ever dreamed you were in heaven? Had an NDE (near death experience) where you felt like you’d gone 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: Infinities

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 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. 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 caught your attention in how this chapter discussed time?

Discussion Questions

1. What’s one insight you got out of this chapter? [go around the circle]
2. What would it feel like to be a ‘Lord of Time’ (pg. 152)—to be able to visit any moment in the entire span of your existence whenever you wanted?
 - a. What moment would you visit first?
3. On page 154 Amanda asks, “You gave up an existence where only good was possible, for the greater good of having us?” What if suffering was a necessary byproduct of a universe that made love possible?
 - a. What does that tell you about what The One is like?
 - b. Is that the kind of God you’d like to be associated with?
4. On page 155, Amanda wonders if God has a need to punish evil. Jesus replies, “Can harm be cured by greater harm? No, we who have willingly endured great pain for the sake of love do not enjoy inflicting it.” After reading this, what do you think?
 - a. Is forgiveness really the closest thing to heaven’s justice on earth? How?

Imagination Exercise: A Conversation about Justice

1. Instructions: When Amanda sees the full restoration of the mother and child on pg. 156, she says: “*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, I like that you can bring justice without punishment. Is there an example where you’ve done that in my life?”
2. Give people three to five minutes to meditate.
3. Take two or three minutes to jot down what you saw, heard or sensed.
4. 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, Children of Light scattered 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)

- What's one detail of The City that you especially loved?

Discussion Questions

1. What about The City do you want to discuss? [go around the circle]
2. The City is home—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?
3. Do you like the idea that everyone has a room in the One Great Home, or would you rather live in a single family American dwelling in heaven? Why?
4. Where in the city would you want to hang out? What would you experience there?
5. Have you ever thought about Jesus feeling unknown on earth—that no one really understood him? What's it like to feel unknown?

Imagination Exercise: The Center

1. 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!*
2. 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).
3. 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?"*
4. Meditate for several minutes
5. Take two or three minutes to jot down what each of you saw or heard, then discuss it as a group.

Optional Video: The New Heaven and New Earth

Chapter 20: The Hall of Memories

30-Second Summary (read aloud)

“Chapter 20 introduces Amanda to a series of exhibits her father helped build that 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 detail of the Hall of Memories that sticks with you?

Discussion Questions

1. What about the Hall of Memories do you want to discuss? [go around the circle]
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 of Memories will make of that?
 - b. Who do you know who should be in the Hall of Memories? Why?
3. Theo works in the forgiveness wing. What other types of memories do you think will be commemorated in heaven? Why?
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

1. Instructions: *“Take a place in your life where you forgave even though it was difficult, and try to imagine that experience as an exhibit in the hall of memories. (Feel free and take details from the exhibits in the book.) What words and actions would be part of the display? What would the onlookers see that you had overcome, and how?”*
2. Spend a few minutes envisioning
3. 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 does that impact your heart?”*
4. Take a couple minutes to absorb the moment.
5. Share with the group what was significant for you in the 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. In an act of great trust applauded by the hosts of heaven, her father chose to let go of anger, trust and go to bed. Trust allows the Man of Light to take anything that happens to us and make something beautiful of it. Yet evil will finally end. It will be *Damnatio Memoriae*: erased from memory. In contemplating how she and Theo had erased her mom from their conversation, 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 in the fullness of heaven there is no grief or loss."*

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- Were you surprised by what happened to Amanda's mom? How?

Discussion Questions

1. What from this chapter do you want to talk about? [go around the circle and discuss what each person is interested in]
2. What do you think of the idea of *Damnatio Memoriae*: that evil will be erased from existence? How does that change your view of eternity?
3. What do you like and what bugs you about what happens to Amanda's mom?
 - a. Do you have a better answer for the fate of those that reject heaven?
4. Do you think The One would order eternal punishment (knowing that he would have to keep people alive forever with his life in order to keep punishing them)? Why or why not?

Imagination Exercise: The One as Parent

1. 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. When The Man of Light talks about how vulnerable it makes you to give someone you love the choice to stay or walk away (pg. 180), he says, "We made you parents because you could never relate to Us otherwise." So let's tune into our shared experience as parents to try to relate to him!"*
2. Read slowly: *"Close your eyes, quiet yourself, and imagine The One as a parent, raising children, loving them, and then letting them choose what to do with their freedom. Some keep in touch with him, while others disappear and never call. Some find that being away makes them more grateful for who he is and what he's given, while others nurse their grudges and try to forget."*
3. *"Where have you experienced that kind of thing as a parent, or when being parented? When a memory from your past bubbles up, ask The One, "What do you want to show me about how it feels to be you from this experience?"*
4. 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 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 bug 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 about Amanda's return to earth would you like to discuss?
 - a. How did you feel when the angel stopped Amanda? When she learned she had to return to earth?
 - b. What did it feel like to identify with her in that moment?
2. What's the first thing you'd do if you arrived outside the great colonnade at the center of heaven like Amanda did?
3. What did it cost The Man of Light to come to earth?
 - a. How does that sacrifice impact your heart?
 - b. (If anyone in the group has a disability): What insight does your disability give you into what The Man of Light lost in order to come to earth?
4. On page 185, The Man of Light says, "You see heaven as it actually is in some ways, and only as it looks from earth in others." If heaven is actually *much* better, *more* mind-bending, a *greater* experience than even this tale...what would that mean?

Imagination Exercise: How Does Heaven See Me?

1. Instructions: *"We're going to put ourselves into the scene when Jesus praises Amanda on page 184. Close your eyes, and let these words touch your heart."*
2. Read slowly: *"When Jesus sees Amanda, takes both of her hands in his, exclaiming, '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 speaking to you personally. What greatness does he see in you? What does he praise? Why is he happy with who you are?"*
3. Give some time to listen; then each person shares what you 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. She called out to The Man of Light, but he didn’t come. And then, faint and faraway, she heard The Voice. A black stone appeared in her hand, with a familiar message: “Step off the edge; and I will catch you.””

Accountability Question (only use ONE per session)

- What struck you about the golden bowl?

Discussion Questions

1. What caught your attention in this chapter?
2. How is the beginning of this chapter like the first pages of Chapter One? What are the parallels?
3. Where do you identify with in Amanda as she tries to cope with being back on earth?
 - a. Have you ever been under anesthesia? What was waking up like?
 - b. Why did The Man of Light send her a black stone? What did it mean?
4. What do you think it would be like to get used to heaven and then wake up back here?
 - a. What does Amanda lose when she returns to earth?
5. How do you feel about the story 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. After talking about what has changed in her since then (losing fear, bitterness and ambition), Jamarcus opens up about his father’s desperate need to be loved, and how he cannot fill it. They decide to ask the Man of Light for help, and so uncover an even deeper wound—the lack of belonging that has plagued Jamarcus since childhood. As Jesus speaks approval to his place of pain, Jamarcus also hears an unexpected word of approval for his dad: that he was a good father. And that is simply because he brought a human being whom The Maker cherishes into the world—Jamarcus himself.”

Discussion Questions

1. What topics in the epilogue do you want to discuss?
2. Is there anything else in the book you want to go back to and touch on a bit more?
3. What did you love about this version of heaven?
 - a. About the Man of Light or The One?
 - b. About Amanda or Theo?
4. How did the book change you or your outlook?
 - a. After she went to heaven, Amanda lost 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

1. Instructions: *“Jamarcus found healing when he asked The Man of Light to tell him how he’s seen in heaven. Let’s ask the same question Jamarcus did, and see what happens! First, close your eyes and quiet your heart. [PAUSE] Then ask, ‘Jesus, what’s one thing you like about me that I’m not quite sure I like about myself?’”*
2. Listen for one minute, then go around the circle and share what Jesus said to you.
 - a. What do you think it meant?
 - b. What’s a follow-up question you could ask him about what he said?

Wrap-up (5-10 minutes)

The last few pages of the book offer resources for getting to know The Man of Light better or passing on what you’ve received to others. Take a bit 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? We could: donate the cost of books for others, leave Amazon reviews, share our copies with friends, even do this study with a new circle of friends.
3. What would you all like to do? [go around the circle and discuss]