

THE SHORT BIBLE

INVESTIGATION, REFLECTION, AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

People can learn from *The Short Bible* in different ways. This guide provides suggestions for studying and reflecting on the entire book and its individual chapters. (Some book-long projects can also be undertaken within the context of individual chapters.) These study and reflection tasks can be undertaken individually or discussed collectively in a small or large group.

Use your own notebook or journal and **be selective** when picking what tasks you want to tackle. There are far too many for one study, so review all the possible tasks and decide which you (or your group) want to respond to.

The tasks in this guide are challenging and are written to help readers understand, analyze, apply, and wrestle with the text. Most of the tasks have multiple parts. Hence, this guide is meant for people at least 16 years old (the guide can be simplified for younger children). Also consider using other Bible study guides to supplement this guide—they are often general enough to apply to the study of *The Short Bible*.

Book-Long Projects

Before reading this book, review the list of possible tasks in *Section A* that relate to the entire book, then decide which you (or your group) want to address as you read. For those who are already familiar with the Bible's events and characters, pick a few additional tasks in *Section B* to address.

Section A – For All Readers

1. Keep a journal of your thoughts/reactions that come to mind as you read. Include new insights you receive or events or characters you have never heard of, any characters that impress you and why, common themes that you notice, people or events that come to mind in your life and how the text relates to them, and what gives you insight into any challenges that you face now.
2. If it is allowed, use highlighters of different colors to track a few general themes as you read. If necessary, look up the related verses in the complete Bible to get a more complete picture of the story.
 - a. Many people become afraid, worried, or feel danger. What are their circumstances, what messages do they receive in the process and from whom, how do they react in the situation, and how is the situation eventually resolved?
 - b. Keep track of all the women mentioned. Record the context and their role, how they act and speak, whether they have a positive or negative influence (or both), and why their story may have been included in the Bible.

- c. Immoral acts often have a negative impact, but sometimes they lead to surprising results. Record situations where immoral acts and those who contradict the law and the usual customs result in positive results. In what ways were these actions used for good purposes? What does this imply about actions that are immoral, illegal, or countercultural?
- d. Note insignificant or flawed people who become important. Record their initial response and what eventually happens. What does this imply about such people?
- e. Highlight sections of the book that discuss justice and helping foreigners, the poor, or who are disadvantaged in some way. What are the implications of these passages for your life?
- f. Note the miracles that occur and determine how they are similar and different.
- g. Who and what are we instructed to pray for? When are prayers said?
- h. Identify events/characters/verses in the New Testament mentioned in the Old Testament.
- i. Highlight verses that you want to memorize, either as written in this book or in the original Bible (there are many versions to consider).

3. Identify key events and characters you want to know more about, then read the entire parts of the Bible where they are discussed. Record insights you gain in the process and how your additional reading and understanding of the context contributes to your understanding of the events or characters. If possible, use other resources to deepen your study.

4. Bible authors use various literary methods (e.g., symbolism, allegories) to make a point and are not meant to be taken literally. Some authors provide teaching about a *specific* situation but don't mean them to apply to *every* situation. Identify these texts and explain why you think they should not be taken literally or why you think they are meant to be specific to a particular time or audience and not universal truths that apply at all times.

5. Highlight agrarian terms and analogies used to convey a more general message. Think of what modern-day terms and analogies could be used to convey the same message to a contemporary audience.

6. Create a "tree" of the main characters, how they relate to each other, where they lived, their nationality, and when they lived. When you finish, reflect on what you notice about the tree.

7. What relationships and events contribute to the strengthening of one's faith, and what factors can tear it down or keep it from growing?

8. How does the transformation of one's mind take place? In what ways has your mind been transformed—where was it before and where it is now? What needs to happen for further transformation to occur in your life and in society? How does the transformation of one's mind relate to the transformation of one's heart and emotions? Does one precede the other? Does personal transformation always lead to positive growth and maturity? Is it steady and linear? What factors can accelerate the growth process?

9. Some common themes and messages of the Bible are rarely discussed among some Christians, while other topics are discussed much more often, even though the Bible has little or nothing to say or is not specific about those topics. What Biblical themes are being neglected and what topics receive more attention than they deserve in today's discussions about religion and Christianity? Why do you think discussions have not focused on some of the core ideas of the Bible?

10. The chapters of this book have descriptive titles and subtitles. What are some possible titles and subtitles for this entire book? What are possible headlines that could be used to describe a journalist's story that covers all the events of the Bible?

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Section B – For Readers Who Are Already Familiar with the Bible Stories/Characters

1. Before reading this book, write down the main stories, characters, themes, and verses that you think are essential to understanding the Bible and its messages. As you read, identify them as they surface in the text. Determine if your understanding of them is different from your original understanding, and record anything new learning you have based on your reading of this book. If the stories and messages you believe are essential don't appear in the book, consider why they might not have been included and where they could be included if this book is revised in the future. Consider working with other people who are doing the same task and compare your efforts related to this activity.

2. Record any parts of this book that are confusing or where you want more information in order to improve your understanding of the story or message. Research the passage in more depth on your own to see if you can improve your understanding.

3. Read the entire section of the Bible that corresponds to the content covered in the chapters of this book (see appendix F). Record any parts of the full Bible sections that you think should be included in this book but are not. Explain why you think these parts should be included.

4. Identify any parts of this book that you think should not be included as not being essential to the storyline (keep in mind that every book in the Bible needs to be included in some way). Say why you think they are not essential. What would be lost if they were not included?

5. Identify any parts of the book that you believe are inaccurate or incorrect. Study them in more detail using other sources to see if your beliefs are correct.

6. How best can a Christian be an ambassador of the Kingdom while living in this world? How does the concept of being an ambassador influence your thinking about your culture, patriotism, and allegiance to your own country?

7. In what ways have Christians gradually conformed to the philosophical, social, economic, and political norms of the world's culture? Why do you think Christians have conformed in these ways?

8. Write a short summary of this book or your own summary of the entire Bible.

9. Consider contacting the author to suggested changes or additions for the next edition. Be specific about what changes you think are needed, why they are needed, and where they should occur. If possible, provide suggested wording.

Chapter-Specific Study, Reflection, and Discussion

Essential Overview

1. Record anything new you learned from this overview and explain how this information may change your perspective of the entire Bible.
2. Record your thoughts on the concept that God is neither male nor female and on the common use of masculine nouns and pronouns to describe God in the Bible. How do you want to refer to the three parts of God and the collective concept of God? Explain why you want to do it that way.
3. Record ways in which God has, or may have tried, to communicate with you. What were the circumstances when this occurred?

Chapter 1: The Beginning

1. The Bible says the forces of good and evil coexisted before humans were created. In what ways did these forces expressed themselves in this chapter? How have they battled and been demonstrated throughout history as well as in your life?
2. Make a list of the major characters discussed in this chapter. Describe their relationship with each other, their strengths and weaknesses, and how God used each of them. What lessons can be learned from each person's life?
3. List examples of deception that occurred in the interactions of the characters in this chapter. What does this infer about the use of deception in one's life? How can deception be detected?

Chapter 2-3: Jacob Returns to Canaan, Life in Egypt

1. List the crimes and deceptions that occur in these chapters, who was involved in them, and the impact they had. What do these events teach us about the Bible characters and how history unfolds?
2. Joseph told his brothers twice that what they did to him was evil but God used it for good. Reflect on your own life and describe any instances when bad things happened to you but, in retrospect, they were blessing in disguise and resulted in something good. Describe the details of the bad and the good. What can you learn from these experiences?
3. Moses was an imperfect man yet is a major hero. Describe his character—his shortcomings and strengths—in light of his circumstances and his call by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Chapter 4: The Israelites Leave Egypt

1. List the miracles that occur in this chapter and how they sustained the Israelites during their time in the wilderness.
2. Make a list of when the Israelites rebelled, disobeyed, and wanted to go back to being slaves in Egypt. Why were they disgruntled? How did Moses and Aaron react? How were the people disciplined?
3. The Israelites were given many commands and other rules to live by, including making sacrifices as payment for their sins. Many of the people did not live by these rules and commands. What do you think about all these rules? Were they unreasonable demands? What is it about human nature that makes us resistant to rules we are told to live by? What commands should not be followed?

Chapter 5: Life in the Wilderness

1. Caleb and Joshua were the only men who said the Israelites could occupy Canaan. Why did they hold an opposing view to the majority of men who said the opposite? When have you stood up for what you believe is right while holding a minority position? If you have, provide the details and what eventually happened.
2. What do you think about the idea discussed in footnote 4 related to the numbers written in the Bible? Does it matter if some people consider the numbers in the Bible to be either accurate or inaccurate? Why or why not?
3. What do you think of the Israelites' penalty for not believing God (40 more years of wandering in the wilderness)? Was it justified or too severe? Why or why not? What do you think God was trying to do by imposing this punishment?
4. Make a list of all the times when people opposed Moses when the Israelites were in the wilderness. Why did the people oppose Moses? How was each situation resolved? What lessons can be learned from these episodes?
5. The Israelites had to defeat many armies on their way to Canaan. Was everything they did on their way justified? What lessons can we learn from what occurred as they traveled to the Promised Land?
6. Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan, so he spoke important final words to the Israelites before he died. What are the most important points he made to them? Why do you think it was necessary and important for each of the points to be said again?

Chapter 6: The Occupation of Canaan

1. At the end of chapter 5, Moses reminded the people that God ordered the killing of all the inhabitants of Canaan, and Joshua supervised the battles over a 7-year period. This "ethnic cleansing" order is used by some to reject God—they say they won't follow a God that orders the

killing of innocent people based on their beliefs and ethnicity (genocide). Why do you think God ordered this? What happened because it was not totally carried out? What are any modern-day equivalents to God's order?

2. Rahab was a prostitute who lied to protect the Israelite spies in Jericho, and she (and her family) were the only ones saved during the battle. She is also listed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1). What do you think about her behavior, her life choices, and Jesus's genealogy? What can you conclude from this part of the story and her legacy?

3. Monuments were often built to commemorate important events in the lives of the Israelites. Why was this done? How do you commemorate important events in your life and in your family? What are (or will be) the important events in your life remembered, and how do you (will you) remember them?

Chapter 7: Israel Struggles in Canaan

1. After the Israelites settled in Canaan, they still had problems from external powers and from within their own ranks. List the problems they encountered and why they occurred.

2. List the people who emerged to help the Israelites address the challenges they faced. Include what problem were faced, what the person did, and how they did it. How were these leaders similar and different? What surprised you about these stories?

3. Reflect on the difficulties you have faced in your life — what was the difficulty, and how did you respond? Using lessons from this chapter, is there anything you could have done differently?

4. When the Israelites experienced peace and a good economy, they developed an attitude of self-sufficiency and forgot about God. What happened when this occurred? In what ways is this happening today? When living in good times, what can a person do to prevent complacency towards God?

Chapter 8–9: Crowning a Unifying King, King David and King Solomon

1. When the Israelites wanted a king, they got one. Why did they want one? What do you think about the process used to select Saul to be the king? What do these events teach us about the Israelites and God?

2. Describe the personality and character of Saul, David, and Solomon. What were their strengths and weaknesses? What in their background influenced them to become the men they were? What do these stories teach us about those who are chosen by God to lead?

3. These chapters give examples of how God's blessing can be removed from both people and nations. Why are blessings given and removed? What does this mean for those living today?

Chapter 10–11: The Divided Kingdom, Both Kingdoms Fall

1. What caused the breakup of the nation, and what happened as a result?
2. Prophets called leaders to change their ways and priorities in both kingdoms. Make a list of the prophets and record what was happening that they said was wrong. What did they say should happen instead? What struggles did they experience, and what sustained them in the face of opposition or a lack of action by the people and national leaders?
3. What do you think about people who call people or the government to change? What do you think are good strategies to get others to change their ways and priorities? In what ways do you feel called to speak out and motivate others to help make the world a better place? What would you say and what specific actions and strategies would you use?
4. God used violent foreign nations to punish the Israelites and send them into exile. The people had ignored the prophets' warnings and appeals to change their ways. What do you think of this punishment? How many years had it been that God was patient and forgiving with the Israelites, despite their continued disobedience (and occasional repentance)? When should patience and forgiveness end and be followed instead with consequences? (Research what Jesus said in Matthew 18:21–22.) When have you been patient and forgiving but ultimately changed and gave punishment? How long did you wait? Was the punishment justified based on the offenses committed? Did the punishment have the desired effect?
5. What were the challenges the Israelites faced when living among those who didn't follow their God? What challenges do you face living in a world that doesn't share your values and beliefs?

Chapter 12: Life in Exile, Then Restoration

1. Jews usually lived together and apart from non-Jews when they were in exile, but others lived and worked alongside the local people. Jeremiah said the Jews should seek the welfare and pray for the city where they lived. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living primarily among people who share your values and customs? How can a person best seek the welfare of the place where they live? What is your view about living among people who don't share your beliefs and values?
2. Daniel, his three friends, and Esther worked in leadership positions within a foreign government, but they were still faithful to God, even to the point of death. Many of the prophets before them spoke the truth to powerful leaders and were punished for doing so. What does it take for people to speak the truth and stand up for their beliefs and act boldly in the face of possible rejection/death? When is such opposition justified? What can happen when people do this? Have you ever done this? If so, what happened afterwards, and do you have any regrets?
3. Both Ezra and Nehemiah evaluated conditions in Palestine when they returned. Based on their unbiased evaluation, they took quick action to address the shortcomings they found. Compare their stories and determine how they were models of courage, how one can best investigate current conditions, and how to take the right action to address problems that are found.

Chapter 13: Biblical Poetry

1. The psalms are highly emotional and contain a number of topics and themes that are repeated many times. Make a list of the themes that occur over and over.
2. Write 1-2 psalms or songs of your own that highlight themes about God and your feelings. Use your own words and consider using analogies and situations that reflect your own life.

Chapter 14: Unique Books in the Old Testament

1. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes provide different ways of looking at life. In Proverbs, life is clear cut; Ecclesiastes says life can be unfair and is more nuanced. Can both be true? Is everything meaningless? If life has meaning, what is its meaning for you? How flexible should you be when it comes to obeying traditional morals?
2. Job is considered one of greatest stories ever written in all of history. What makes it a classic? Record experiences you have had in your life that are similar to what Job experienced and what you learned in the process. What do you think about what is suggested in footnote 11?
3. Jonah's story discusses the consequences of disobedience, God's compassion, and how we respond when others receive unexpected grace. What do you think about what happened to both Jonah and the people of Nineveh? Did they both get what they deserved? In what ways have you been like Jonah and the people of Nineveh?
4. Why do you think the Song of Solomon is included in the Bible? What contemporary stories have a similar plot?

Concluding Analysis of the Old Testament

1. When you finish reading Part 1 of this book, reflect on what you have read so far and write your own summary (1-2 pages) of the progression of stories in the Old Testament. Include the main themes, lessons, and characters. Conclude by recording what is clear to you and what is confusing or disconcerting, and note the implications for your own life based on what you have read so far.
2. Make up your own concluding activity after you have read all of Part 1.

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Chapter 15: The Messiah Arrives

1. Many major events took place in the 400 years after Malachi's book was written. The Jews became divided and disagreed on many issues while an evolving international community unfolded in their midst. There were also "second-class" citizens living in Palestine. Explain how that context is similar to what we experience today.
2. The Israelites, John the Baptist, and Jesus all spent time in the wilderness. What challenges do people face when living in any type of wilderness(physical, emotional, spiritual)? What are the

benefits and challenges of being in a place where there are no distractions or where you are (or feel) alone?

3. Jesus was tempted by Satan three times in the account of his wilderness experience. How did he respond to each? How do *you* respond to temptation? Is it obvious when you are being tempted? If not, why not? How can you know when the voices in your head are from God or coming from elsewhere? What influences you the most about how to act and make decisions?

4. Why do you think Jesus was not accepted by those in his hometown? What can we learn from this phenomenon? Has something like this ever happened to you? If so, explain what happened and why.

Chapter 16–17: Acts of Jesus, Teachings of Jesus

1. Jesus interacted with many types of people during his three years of ministry. What kinds of people did he treat well or embrace, and what kinds of people did he criticize or condemn? Who embraced Jesus and who rejected him? What are the implications of these interactions for those who follow Jesus today? Would you be embraced or condemned by Jesus if he were alive now?

2. Jesus frequently defied the religious rules and customs of his time and spoke against misplaced priorities when he thought compassion was needed. Is it ever appropriate to disobey laws, customs, and rules? If so, when and how? What are the implications of Jesus's example for those who follow him?

3. Jesus showed great anger and impatience in the Temple when he disrupted the marketplace. What does this imply about when showing anger, using violence, and being impatient is justified?

4. The Sermon on the Mountain contains many new teachings and also messages that overruled some of what had been taught previously to the Jews. What parts of the sermon are most meaningful to you, and what parts present the biggest challenge to you?

5. Jesus said he came to fulfill the Law and prophets. What does this mean? When should we change to embrace the new and adjust the views we previously believed? How difficult is it for you to deviate from your current ways of doing things? What changes do you need to make? What will it take for you to make the change?

6. In the parable of the seeds, what keeps the seeds and plants from becoming fully developed? What does a plant need to become mature? How does this apply to growing one's faith into maturity? How does this apply to the cost of discipleship?

7. The stories of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son are often used as examples of showing unusual compassion for others. How are these two stories similar and different? What messages is Jesus sending to his audience with these two parables?

8. How do you react when people get a reward you think they don't deserve? How do you feel when people get more than others? Should everybody get what they deserve? Should we try to

make sure everybody gets the same thing? What does everybody deserve to have? What should be done if they don't get it?

9. Reflect on the prayer Jesus modeled for his disciples, in which people do the talking. How do the elements of the prayer relate to your life right now? When can you be most receptive to hearing God's voice (the listening part of prayer)?

Chapter 18: Arrest, Trial, and Execution

1. Jesus says he is the good shepherd and the gate, and those who enter through him will be saved. What are the pros and cons, the dangers and blessings, to being a follower of Jesus? What are some different ways people enter the gate?

2. Some people are sure they are going to heaven. According to what Jesus taught, what conditions must be met for this to happen? (Review the content in other chapters as well as this chapter when responding.)

3. Jesus was a king but didn't act like one. Make a list of how Jesus was different from other kings. In what ways is his example of leadership similar and different from that of today's leaders?

4. Jesus died as the final sacrifice to pay what is owed by all humans to have a relationship with God. That means ceremonial sacrifices are no longer required like they were in the past. What is still required of humans? How do people still try to earn God's approval?

Chapter 19: Life After Death

1. Many people saw Jesus after he came back to life. If you were alive at that time and had listened to Jesus and witnessed his crucifixion, and then you were told by your friends that Jesus was alive again, would you have believed them? What would it have taken for you to believe Jesus was alive again?

2. Only 120 people continued to follow Jesus at the time he left the earth, yet thousands heard him preach and interacted with him. Why do you think he had so few followers at that point?

Chapter 20: The Apostles Respond and Scatter

1. Peter and others were inspired by God's spirit and started to explain how Jesus was the Messiah to the Jews who had expected a different kind of Messiah. What caused thousands of Jews to believe, how did they respond, and what happened to the disciples when they continued preaching? What do these events teach us?

2. Ananias was afraid when he was told to visit Saul, but he did it anyway. Many characters in the Bible are told not to be afraid when they encountered unusual circumstances. What are you afraid of? What does it take for you to act with courage, even when you are afraid?

3. Peter's positive encounter with Cornelius, a Gentile leader in an occupying army, is a pivotal point in the Bible story. It drastically changed the way new believers viewed non-Jews and Jewish rules. Debates followed about what to do about Jewish customs that had been followed for centuries. As a result, radical changes were made to the believer's values, traditions, and practices. In what ways has new information about something you previously believed changed your life? How did you get that new information? Why did you make the change? What happened when you told others why you changed? How does this story inform ideas of nationalism and patriotism compared to loving the entire world and people who follow different traditions?

Chapter 21–22: Paul's Travels, From Jerusalem to Rome

1. Paul's travels to areas beyond Palestine reinforced the idea that the gospel was meant for the entire world, not just the Jews. Both Jews and Gentiles became believers, and debates ensued about whether Gentiles should follow Jewish traditions. How was this debate settled, and what are the implications of the decision as it relates to those living in other cultures?

2. Most Jews rejected the claim that Jesus was the Messiah. Why do you think they had such hostility toward Paul and others who were preaching about Jesus? What motivated Paul and others to continue preaching despite facing strong opposition? What methods did Paul use to spread the gospel? What made him such an effective messenger to so many different types of people?

3. Paul and his companions visited many cities on his trips to spread the news about Jesus. What was the impact of their message on the people and cities they visited?

4. Violence and lies were made against Paul in order to silence him, but he didn't stop. What are the different ways he responded? What are effective ways to react to physical threats and false claims? How did he use his privilege and background to his advantage? In what ways can you use experiences in your life to help you explain your points of view to others?

Chapter 23: Paul's Letters to Believers

1. Paul's letters to those he knew in the cities he visited clarified, encouraged, and strengthened the faith of those in the new local churches. What were the challenges facing the churches, and what were Paul's main messages to them? To what extent do these challenges still exist today?

2. What parts of Paul's letters do you like the most, which concern you the most, which are the hardest to do, and which do you want to investigate further?

3. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he tells his readers not to be anxious about anything, and he gives advice about how to respond to anxiety. Jesus said something similar (see Sermon on the Mount quote in chapter 17). What do you worry about, and how do you deal with it? Why do you think you worry? Does it relate to being afraid? What can you do differently when you start to worry?

4. In First Corinthians, Paul's letter to the immature believers includes many types of instruction. What are their circumstances when he said he was only able to feed them "milk" rather than solid food? In what ways do these same conditions exist today? What do you think Paul means by solid food? What does it take for Christians to be mature enough to be ready for solid food?

Chapter 24: Other Letters to Believers

1. What are your favorite parts of the general letters written by the authors mentioned in this chapter? Why are they meaningful to you?

2. The letter from James comments on the concepts of faith and works. He says both are needed and that the absence of works indicates that one's faith is dead. What does the Bible say are the most important works of a believer? What can you say and do about people who say they have faith but are not doing what they are commanded to do? What are your views about those who do good works but says they don't have any faith in God?

3. The book of Hebrews summarizes the main story of the entire Bible. If you had to write a one-page summary of the Bible, what would it include – what are the main points and their supporting points? (See Appendix B for some reminders)

Chapter 25: Predictions About the Future

1. John strongly admonished the churches in Asia Minor about how they had made inappropriate compromises in their Christian life. What challenges do believers face today as they live out their faith among non-believers (the coexistence of "good seeds and weeds")? What can be done to counteract or meet these challenges?

2. The early Christians were severely persecuted for their faith. When has such persecution and oppression happened throughout history? How would you react if revealing your beliefs jeopardized your life and family (in some parts of the world, this still happens)?

3. Apocalyptic texts are difficult to understand, yet many people believe they know what the symbolism of Revelation means. What are the main points of this final book of the Bible? To what extent does it matter to you to know how all the details fit together? In what ways does the story of the final days of history affect you and how you live? What do you think about how the entire collection of books in the Bible ends?

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Concluding Analysis of the New Testament

1. When you finish reading Part 2, reflect on the messages of both the Old and New Testaments. How are they similar and different? Write your own summary (2-3 pages) of the progression of all the stories. Include the main themes, lessons, and characters. Conclude by recording what is clear to you, what is confusing or disconcerting, and the implications for your own life.

2. What parts of the New Testament are hard to live by? Why is it so hard? What would it take for you to live the way Jesus and the apostles said we should live? What would happen if you did? Change is hard—what does it take for you to make changes in your life?

3. What characters and stories in the New Testament can you identify with the most? What is it that makes you identify with them?

4. In chapter 16, Jesus said he came to call sinners to repent, not the righteous, because healthy people don't need a doctor. The gospel is "good news" to those who are not healthy—it's a remedy for those who are poor in spirit, those who have lost hope or who experience significant struggles. Is it difficult for a healthy person with no significant struggles to enter the kingdom of God (see footnote 14 in chapter 16)? What does this imply about the pursuit of monetary success and earthly comforts? To what extent are struggles a necessary prerequisite for entering the Kingdom? Why do you think some people followed Jesus rather quickly while others rejected him?

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Epilogue and Author's Perspective

1. The church has changed significantly in the past 2,000 years. How has it changed, and what are the main challenges it faces now? How should these challenges be addressed? What do you think are the most important things the church should do now to further the Kingdom of God on earth?

2. What do you live for? What sacrifices will you make for it? What or who will you die for? Where did you get the ideas that motivate you to make such a sacrifice? What kind of difference will such a sacrifice make?

3. In what ways has this entire story and the evolving nature of God's strategies for the world affected you? What are the implications for you and others? What are your next steps for you, for your family, and your involvement in society?

4. Record the story of your own spiritual journey. Include significant people and events that influenced your life, important milestones and miracles, influential choices you made, times when you grew or declined in your spiritual life, what you believe, why you acted as you did, the ways in which God has led you during your journey, any goals you met and desires you still have, and how you want to be remembered when you die. Plot the events of your spiritual journey on a timeline and perhaps include a vertical axis for the timeline that measures your level of spiritual maturity.

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