

# FINDING YOUR WAY

group leader's guide

Jane Rubietta

Copyright © 2015 by Jane Rubietta  
Published by Wesleyan Publishing House  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250

This study guide is to be used in conjunction with *Finding Your Way: From Pain to Purpose—the Lives of Adam and Noah* by Jane Rubietta (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2015).

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org>. All rights reserved.

All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce the contents of this publication for ministry or educational purposes. No portion of this publication may be reproduced for profit without prior written permission of the publisher.

# CONTENTS

How to Use This Guide	4
Week 1. December 1–7	5
Week 2. December 8–14	7
Week 3. December 15–21	9
Week 4. December 22–28	11
Week 5. December 29–January 4	13
Week 6. January 5–11	15
Week 7. January 12–18	16
Week 8. January 19–25	17
Week 9. January 26–February 1	18
Week 10. February 2–8	19
Week 11. February 9–15	20
Week 12. February 16–29	21

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The daily readings of *Finding Your Way: From Pain to Purpose—the Lives of Adam and Noah* have been combined by weeks to form a twelve-week group leader’s guide. If your group is meeting for a shorter time, combine multiple weeks for each group session. There will be ample material to use during your meeting time. The questions in this guide work well in combination with the application elements at the close of each reading.

To get started, each group member should have a personal copy of *Finding Your Way*. It is helpful if they read the current week’s selections in advance of the meeting. Individual group sessions are divided into two parts: “Digging In” contains icebreaker questions, non-threatening openings that invite people into relationship, story, and memories; “Digging Deeper” takes a more in-depth look at elements in the book’s chapters, related Scriptures, and application.

**Note:** At the beginning of each session, you might want to remind people that silence is uncomfortable but good and allows people time to process. Also, to honor confidentiality and to create a safe environment, adapt the motto, “What we say here, stays here.”

## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK AT EACH SESSION

1. What stood out for you in these readings?
2. What Scriptures spoke to you? In what ways?
3. Where did you sense God tugging at your heart?
4. What emotional responses did you experience?
5. What will be different today? Tomorrow?

## CLOSING

Close by reading a selected “Traveling Mercy” aloud, either as a group, or in pairs to one another, so it is intimate for each person.

For more group ideas and resources, please visit [www.JaneRubietta.com](http://www.JaneRubietta.com). If your group is interested in a video conference call with the author, during or toward the end of your study together, please contact her at [info@JaneRubietta.com](mailto:info@JaneRubietta.com).

# WEEK 1

*December 1–7*

## DIGGING IN

1. As you begin this study, journal about your own sense of direction, purpose, and pain that might be inhibiting you. Write a prayer about it for this journey. Return to it weekly in the group (and daily in your individual time) to update your travels.

2. When do you say, “Back to the beginning”? What do you hope will happen when you do? How well are you able to actually start over or return to the beginning?

3. What’s your favorite “Help! I’m lost!” story?

4. Where are you having trouble finding your way? How about people you love?

5. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are not a travelogue in the same way that the rest of the book recounts the travels of God’s people. Rather, these first chapters cover more years than the rest of the book, so it time-travels rather than land-travels. If you were to write a travelogue of your life, what highlights would you include?

6. When you read the first eleven chapters of Genesis what stood out to you? Where did you experience wonder? Doubt? Hope?

7. Haul out your list of fears. How do these opening verses of Genesis bring assurance for you?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Consider applying “In the beginning” to a current situation or relationship. How would it change the way you live today? What about the bits and pieces of yesterday that you drag into today?

2. Love without creation isn’t really love, and creation without love isn’t really creation. Talk about that.

3. Finding our way from pain to purpose includes creativity. How have you experienced this in your life? How can love be a creative response to pain?

4. What struggles do you bring to the issue of creation, and to God’s creation of the world for your sake? Do you agree with the idea that God created the world *for your sake*? Why or why not?

5. We all bring doubts to the table when the discussion is about creation. This isn’t intended to be a venue of debate between camps, but rather, a place of intersection where God meets us in our doubts, fears, hopes, and weariness, and we meet one another there in acceptance. Putting aside questions for the moment, what happens within you when you consider that God declares you worthwhile, worth loving, worth creating, and worth the whole earth?

6. The word for create, *bara*, is used forty-four times in the Old Testament “only for God’s activity and denotes ‘the production of something fundamentally new, by the exercise of a sovereign originative power’” (F. F. Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary*, p. 114). In Genesis 1:1, it means “the divine activity of fashioning something new, fresh, and perfect” (NET). It doesn’t necessarily mean something from nothing (since this word is used for God’s creation of the first man). Hang onto the new, fresh, perfect creation. Is it possible to apply this to your own soul now? How might this change your own sense of self?

# WEEK 2

December 8–14

## DIGGING IN

1. Talk about the meaning of the words *dark* and *deep*. How do you feel about either?
2. When do the words *formless* and *empty* describe you, your feeling about your life, your state of soul, your meaning or purpose? In what ways do you feel in the dark?
3. “Insignificance is corrosive, and so much of our society’s ills can be traced to these three words” (formless, empty, dark). In what ways do you believe this to be true or not?
4. How have you learned to live in the darkness for a season? In what ways do you seek growth there? How hard is it to focus on growing in dark places?
5. When you think about words and their power, what person comes to mind whose words you tend to believe, immediately discount, or even fear? How about your words having power?
6. Read Amos 4:13 in *The Message*. Imagine this creator God wants a relationship with you and with those you love. How might this verse help you find your way through the storms and difficulties of your life?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Reread the creation account in Genesis 1. What gives you hope? What stands out for you on the various days of creation? How do you live in the unfinished nature, for instance, of your own personal day two?
2. How does the sentence about the Spirit of God moving over the waters encourage you? Why? The word for *Spirit* in this verse is “breath” or “wind” in Hebrew, and can mean “stirring.” When do you long for that breath, that stirring, that wind?
3. “Darkness” in Genesis 1:2 simply means “darkness” in Hebrew, but has come to symbolize throughout the Old Testament anything that opposes God (NET). The idea of formless waste and darkness as opposing God slows my brain function a little bit, since that waste would appear to be inanimate. In what ways does this render the next verses even more powerful?
4. Ten times we see power associated with God speaking. Compare these instances in Genesis 1 with John 1. How might you harness that power yourself? For example, where in Scripture has God said something instructive or powerful that you want to be spoken into your life? Take time to determine what God might want to speak into your life right now.

5. Sometimes people say “God told me” or “God showed me” or “God spoke to me.” How does this jive with your experiences with God? In what venues are you most open to hearing God’s voice? When has God spoken to you clearly, and how did you receive that word?

6. The parallels between creation, Jesus, and people are remarkable, challenging, and convicting. Compare Genesis 1:3–4, 14; John 1:5; 8:12; 1 John 1:5–10. In what ways are you challenged or convicted?

7. The book of John makes a theme of darkness and light. In John 1:5, the ongoing nature of the light of Christ is that the light keeps shining. Darkness is powerless to overcome, grasp, seize, or conquer that light. How do you see that in Christ’s life, in the world, and in your own life? How does this give you hope?



# WEEK 3

*December 15–21*

## DIGGING IN

1. When have you been a part of a talent show? What was a talent you shared? One you wish you had? Whose “light” did you envy the most?
2. Like the blue jays, we have our own unique markings and featherings, though we might not appreciate them. What are some of your unique markings that you have come to peace about or seen God put to good use in your life? What are some featherings that you need to come to peace about and invite God to employ?
3. How much do you believe the song “This Little Light of Mine”? What is hard for you about shining? Is little really enough in light of how big others’ lights are?
4. Why was creation risky for God?
5. Plenty of people do not act like they’re created in God’s image. Reflect on the moments you know you did not represent God well and discuss what you need to change for the future.

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Creating something that is from something that wasn’t is beyond my intellectual capacities. God’s creation of the world and then of us as human beings short-circuits everything for me. What does it mean to you to be made in God’s image and likeness? Is this trite? If so, how can it become meaningful again?
2. *Image* and *likeness* in Genesis 1:26–27 have overlapping meaning, but the bottom line is that the resemblance (spiritual and mental) is real. When are you convicted about how far off you are in the likeness and image of God? Who in your life reflects God well?
3. Without all our gifts, we’re all dying and the church becomes irrelevant. People leave the church to find someplace or some people who honor their gifts. Talk about what your church is doing well in terms of welcoming gifts and ideas.
4. Where do you see fruitfulness in your life? Look at Galatians 5:19–26 and consider the creation account, the blue jays, your personality and gifts. What applications can you make? What would you do if you could do anything, and how might you fit in your gifts and fruitfulness and still keep your day job?

5. Take time in your group to work through God's "Let there be" words, applying Scripture to your life. What promises has God made in the Bible to you? Try speaking them aloud throughout the week and then report back to the group about the differences this makes.

6. How do you struggle to call it a day? When is it harder? Easier? What hangs over you and why? What would it look like to practice Sabbath principles throughout the week, calling it a day at the end of the day or spending time in worship a little bit each morning?

7. As we move toward Christmas, how does the momentum of creation and Christ's presence aid you in finding your way (see John 1:1-4)?

# WEEK 4

December 22–28

## DIGGING IN

1. Finding our way through the holidays should count as its own endeavor, and for those holidays to return to the original meaning of *holy days* would be a phenomenal gift this season. In what ways are you observing holy days throughout Advent? It's easy to get off-track with our primary hopes and purpose, given the hoopla of December. How are you staying on track? Where are you finding clarity about your way, moving from pain to purpose?

2. What was the most meaningful gift you ever received? Given? Was the gift that you gave received with the joy you hoped? If not, how did you handle that?

3. When have you seen God's provisions in lean times? What are some of your Emmanuel moments, those unaccountable moments where nothing except "God with us" could explain them?

4. As you read Genesis 2, what strikes you about the gift of creation and God's generosity?

5. God created a world of beauty and then settled us in its midst, nurturing us. How do you find nurture for yourself? What struggles do you have to allow that nurturing time? Does it feel like a splurge, something undeserved, in light of all your un-dones and half-dones? How can you create an environment that nurtures creativity and beauty?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. We don't get very far without breathing. Once oxygen is depleted from our brains, we die. With oxygen, we live. When God formed the first man and woman and breathed life into them, it was the breath that enabled them to become "a living being" (Gen. 2:7). The word in Genesis 1:30 for breath of life is used hundreds of times, and means "life, life force, soul." In 2:7, the word *breath* is used only twenty-four times, and in this verse we hear "the man became a living being." The man would not be wholly alive without the breath of God in him. In what ways do you experience the breath of God that makes you wholly alive?

2. Researchers are finding that deep breathing heals stress, reducing its impact on the body. Try breathing in three deep breaths through your nostrils, filling your lungs with as much air as possible. Hold the breath for a few seconds, long enough to notice and feel it. Release the air through your mouth.

3. Compare Genesis 1–2 and notice the different point of views. The best explanation I've heard is that Genesis 1 is creation from God's point of view; chapter 2 is the human viewpoint. The word

for “humankind” in Hebrew is *adam*, referring to both male and female (see 1:26–27; 5:2; 6:1, 5–7; 9:5–6).

4. In Genesis 2:6, the Scriptures describe God’s method for watering the earth in those days: “Springs would well up from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground” (NET). “Ground” is from the Hebrew word *adamah*, meaning “fertile ground.” See the wordplay between 1:26 and 2:6? This makes the rains (and Noah’s faith) all the more remarkable. Where do you see that sort of faith in another? Where do you find watering springs?

5. What do you make of God’s intention in 1:26, “So that they may rule”? What bearing does being made in God’s image and likeness have on ruling? The human race collectively has the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of that which is put under them and the privilege of using it for their benefit. How has this been effective? How has it been twisted and resulted in harm?

# WEEK 5

*December 29–January 4*

## DIGGING IN

1. What's your favorite New Year's tradition? What do you remember from childhood about the holiday?
2. What are your most memorable resolutions? Did you fail or succeed at them?
3. Do you consider yourself an introvert or an extrovert? Why? Share an example from your life.
4. In addition to personality type, what life experiences might have pushed you toward or away from community? When have you taken either approach to an extreme and to what effect? What qualities do you look for in a community? Who are some of your "How is it with your soul" friends?
5. If you still live at home with your parents, or your parent(s) now lives with you, what challenges do you experience? It's nice to imagine "leave and cleave," as we used to say, but it's not everyone's lifelong reality. With an aging society, boomerang children, hard times, and broken relationships, the configuration of the family shifts greatly. What general principles from Genesis 2:18–24 help you navigate these shifts?
6. Some consider Genesis 3 to be a fairly controversial chapter. Read it in its entirety as a group. What issues arise for you? Questions? Hope?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Read the famous passage in Genesis 2:18–24. Now compare to 2 Corinthians 7:25–35; and Hebrews 10:19–25. How does this apply to single people, youth, or the body of Christ?
2. The Scriptures tell us that, "God sets the lonely in families" (Ps. 68:6). How do you find this to be true, and where have you had to seek out a family? Relate this to Genesis 2:24. If your family does not take away your loneliness, who then are your nurturing friends?
3. Read Isaiah 43:19. What new things are you inviting God to do this New Year? What old things can you reinvigorate? How have you perceived God doing a new thing over this past year? How hard is it to release failures?
4. Genesis 2:25 is unblushing as to the freedom of being naked and unashamed. How is this imaginable or unimaginable to you? In what ways do you succumb to shame, the opposite of God's "very good"? How do you resist it?

5. The timing of the serpent's appearance seems perfect. Perfect safety allows no room for an enemy, so the Enemy would attempt to destroy that safety. How have you experienced this timing? How do you allow God's "very good" to cover you?

6. We haul shame with us; we usually don't need anyone to invent it for us. See 1 John 2:8 and Psalm 22:5 for tools to work with shame. Psalm 4:2 highlights another aspect of shame that perhaps we do not consider. How would you apply this passage to your life?

7. Whose voices carry weight for you? In positive or negative ways? How do you tune in, and how might you turn your attention to better voices, or learn to recognize the true voice of God? How do the sheep recognize their shepherd's voice (see John 10)?

# WEEK 6

*January 5–11*

## DIGGING IN

1. Who in your life really seems to display godly characteristics and actions? In what ways? How important is that to you, in others or in yourself?
2. What cover-ups do you see in Genesis 3:1–12? How about in your own life? What are some fig-leaf moments you remember, your own or another's?
3. What do you remember most about “-gate” scandals? What's your own personal “-gate”?
4. Reflect on what you think about the possibility of God's grief after the first man and woman ate the forbidden fruit. It speaks of a love far beyond anything we could imagine with our earth-bound hearts, but of everything we long for in the deepest part of our souls.
5. When have you been lost and/or found? When have you tried to hide and what's your preferred method of hiding?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. When the Evil One said, “You will be like God” (Gen. 3:5), what did he get right and wrong? In what ways are you like and unlike God?
2. One of the great losses of Eden is that when man and woman were created, they knew no sin, and God could be in their presence. Tracing their journey out of Eden and through the history of the Israelites, the common denominator was God seeking relationship with them. All the rules in the Torah are seen not as a bunch of legalities, but as a means of being in relationship and knowing how to live. How would the “rules” lead toward holiness, and how do you coordinate the command “Be holy as I am holy” with your own life?
3. What would it take to live in minute-by-minute holiness? Would you still need Christ's life, death, and resurrection? Why or why not?
4. First John 1:9 states that when we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us. What is the difference between the two actions on God's part? How does this pertain to holiness and the need for Christ?
5. Where do you sense God wanting to communicate with you the most? What is God trying to say?
6. What is your take on sin? When have you seen the ripple effects of sin? How might you take your own sin more seriously and others' sins against you less seriously?

# WEEK 7

January 12–18

## DIGGING IN

1. Adam and Eve had a hand-in-the-cookie-jar moment, one that they weren't prepared for. They'd had no experience with evil or death. They knew about obedience and disobedience, but couldn't possibly know the ramifications of disobedience. Talk about that in light of the consequences that follow.

2. What's different about the work order in Genesis 2:15 and 3:17? Where do you see the effects of the fall and the curse in your own life and in the earth?

3. How does God's command, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28), get taken out of context?

4. The root of the word *multiply* means "to increase in some respect; abundance, be in authority, bring up, enlarge, excel, exceeding(ly), be full of, be or make great, grow up, heap, and increase." How might this be true for you, whether or not you have children, bear children, or are married?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Where or what are your thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:18)? To whom do you give the right to address those issues? How do you respond when someone talks to you about your thorns?

2. Eve is not named until after God curses the ground, complicates (to say the least) the process of childbearing and relationships, and relegates the serpent to belly-crawling forever. Adam names his wife Eve, meaning "the mother of all the living." What do you make of this name, given the context? This is also the first time the word *mother* is used in Scripture.

3. In what ways is work an end in itself for you? How does your work, whether home or beyond, bolster your self-image? How does it complement your gifts? Or not?

4. As Christians, we're expected by God to uphold interpersonal standards from the Bible and to challenge one another to growth and good works. Where do you experience this? Where do you—or don't you—experience this?

5. How might your day job be transformed into a place where you bear fruit and multiply?

6. In what ways could you use your gifts outside your primary occupation while still focusing on fruitfulness there? Talk about your worth and its relationship to your work and your worth based on Genesis 1:24–27 and compared to Genesis 3:17–19?



# WEEK 8

January 19–25

## DIGGING IN

1. What was your biggest fear as a kid or teenager? Now as an adult?
2. How are your feelings during this winter? Seasonal Affective Disorder? Hibernation happy? Let down? Worried? Caged-up?
3. Consider Adam and Eve’s exit from Eden. What gateways are you currently facing? What do you carry with you when you travel? What would you like to leave behind?
4. What films have you seen that speak of exile or refugees? For instance, *The Way Back*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *Thor*, or *E.T.* In what ways are you able to empathize with the exiles or refugees? How do you keep your heart and mind aware of the issues facing others who are on the run, in hiding, or falsely imprisoned? In what ways might you be able to help?
5. What sorts of exile have you experienced?
6. What have you left behind? What do you regret leaving?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. When have you experienced God going before you as Deuteronomy 31:1–8 reports? How do you maintain a sense of God going with you?
2. Abandonment issues are a common denominator among most people. So much of our relationship issues stem from fear of abandonment. Where do you see this in your own life?
3. How was the exit from Eden lifesaving for Adam and Eve?
4. In spite of Jesus coming to “tabernacle” among us, he lived a life of exile. Look at the various instances in the Scriptures: Matthew 2:13–14, 19–23; Luke 9:58. In what ways do you see him as rooted instead of transient? How do you stay rooted in spite of exile?
5. The word for Eden in Hebrew means “pleasure.” Since the exile from Eden, how does the hope for pleasure impact you, humanity, commerce, and nature?
6. How many of the “great afraids” fit you? What are some silly ways you’ve tried to avoid your fears?
7. Read Nehemiah 9:31. Where do you experience mercy in your exile—from God and others? Where do you offer it?

# WEEK 9

*January 26–February 1*

## DIGGING IN

1. What was your first job? How much did you love it or loathe it? What kind of work ethic was instilled in you and by whom?
2. Are you someone who over-works or just gets by? Do you give everything you have while at work, or just put in time until clocking out?
3. What's your version of working the soil? Where do you experience disappointment or anger over your work?
4. How do the offerings brought by Cain and Abel indicate they were trying to find God? In what ways do you see people trying to find God in daily life?
5. What sorts of longings lie behind your "offerings"?
6. Where have you seen a fiscal tailspin in your own life; perhaps relational, financial, or spiritual?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Look at Genesis 4:1–8. How do you view God's response to the offerings and Cain's response to God?
2. Our fear of inadequacy drives much of our "-aholisms." Work, play, neglect, or food becomes our go-to cover-up. From God's response, what activates within you? How does Psalm 51:16–17 shift your focus?
3. Sin isn't a particularly friendly topic in church these days. We're not exactly driven by the desire for holiness, nor do we want anyone else pointing out our sin. The Bible is unapologetic in mentioning sin and its costs. In what ways does sin create a debt and a tailspin? How do you see sin's workings in your life, in the country, or in a loved one's life?
4. How do you respond to another who might, in love or not, point out sin? What does repentance look like for you?
5. Reread Genesis 4:7 and pull out the principles there for recognizing and dealing with sin. How could you apply this in your own life?
6. Compare Micah 5:4 with John 10:1–11 and Hebrews 13:20–21. How might today be a new day? What comfort do you find in this sequence of Scripture? How do you apply it? What does this have to do with finding your way?

# WEEK 10

February 2–8

## DIGGING IN

1. What have been some restless or wandering times in your life?
2. Cain exclaimed, “I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth” (Gen. 4:14). What’s not true about his statement? Why?
3. How have you abandoned yourself? How did you find yourself?
4. What’s the difference between self-care, self-recognition, and self-centered behavior? How do you distinguish between them?
5. Describe the most perfect “home” time you’ve experienced.

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Read Isaiah 42:16. How have you experienced God leading you? What unfamiliar paths revealed God’s presence? Where do you find light in the dark?
2. Adam, Eve, and Cain’s journeys seemed more like mistakes than clear routes, like detours than destinations. Consider recent detours in your life. What looked like a detour and ended up being the most direct route? What detours haven’t gotten you there, after all, wherever *there* is?
3. What grief might Adam, Eve, and Cain have experienced? What grief have you experienced and how did you respond? Do you see a male versus female type of response or protocol versus acceptability?
4. How have you established a rhythm of remembering during the difficult times in your life? How might God’s order of creation help? Where does “song” come into your daily process?
5. Though Cain was to be a wanderer the rest of his days, his first act was building a city, interestingly called Nod, which means “wandering” in Hebrew. See Isaiah 58:6–12 for how God really perceives the wanderer. Does this include Cain or you? What responsibility do we have for the wanderers? How might these principles help you find your way?
6. The journey to Seth’s birth doesn’t seem too intense, but that little tune that Lamech sang to his wives sends cold chills across me. It doesn’t take long for vengeance to become the chorus and song of the day. How does the practice in Genesis 4:26 restore order for you? How about the meaning of Noah’s name and Matthew 11:28–30?

# WEEK 11

*February 9–15*

## DIGGING IN

1. When you were a kid, who was the most popular person, the MVP of the playground, lunchroom, or gym? How did you compare yourself to this person?
2. Whether it's social, physical, or economic, people with stature can either bless others or take advantage of them. When have you experienced either end of the advantage spectrum?
3. How do you compensate for what you perceive to be your shortcomings? What ways have you found to walk tall in this world?
4. Talk about what measuring up means to you. Who critiques you, judges you, decides if you fit in? When, like Cain, do you hear correction and guidance as judgment (see Gen. 4:7)?
5. What kind of a response do you have with commands like, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matt. 7:1)?
6. What's one of the strangest orders you've ever had to follow, something that made no sense but turned out to be right? (Like, "Noah, build a ship even though it has never rained before.")

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Cain's problem (or one of them) was that he tried to outrun his sin. When have you tried this? What happened?
2. Are you angry? Why? When have you seen anger used as a weapon rather than a tool?
3. What three qualities describe Noah (see Gen. 6:9)? To whom in your life would you apply these same qualities? Do you look for them in yourself?
4. In what ways would Noah, whose name means "rest," bring rest as his father hoped? How do others perceive you: restful to be around, a person who balances rest and work, a soul at rest, or restless? How do you perceive yourself? In what ways do you seek rest or avoid it?
5. Noah had to hold onto faith and God in some raging weather and uncertainty (see Gen. 7). When has this been true for you? How did you hold on?
6. When have you felt forgotten by others or God? How did you find your way back from the feeling of anonymity, or how did you succumb to it? What do you know to be true about God's memory? What passages help you to know you are not anonymous (for example, Isa. 44:21; 49:15)?

# WEEK 12

*February 16–29*

## DIGGING IN

1. What's your favorite junk food? When do you fill up on bad calories, and then stuff yourself with good things or just not have an appetite? Are you particularly susceptible to eating empty foods at certain times?

2. When do you eat at the wrong table, savoring bitterness, worry, un-forgiveness, or anger? When do you notice your poor menu, and how do you push back from the table? How do you leave the table when others are grumbling, backbiting, or being negative instead of participating?

3. How do you want to be remembered? What are you afraid people will remember about you?

4. Where do you sense PTSD in another person? Yourself? How do you find grace there?

5. One work-around for PTSD is self-care. (For severe and/or ongoing PTSD, please seek help. You deserve to be whole.) How are you doing on the SELF acronym? Another acronym when it comes to addiction behavior in identifying potential pitfalls before you tumble is HALT. If you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, watch out and figure out how to take care of yourself immediately.

6. Looking back, what kinds of rubble and refuse have spilled over your path? How have you handled them? How has community been helpful? When have you shirked community? What might change if you made a deliberate effort toward community—unity in the community—in the family of God and in your own family?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Summarize your journey thus far: from birth to right now, along with the beginning of the study to this moment. When have you felt lost? Needed direction? Where are you beginning to see your purpose? How much has pain contributed to your lost-ness, in terms of your reactions to pain?

2. Write down your hopes for the next months, weeks, or days. What higher purpose might God be calling you to? How might the Holy Spirit be redirecting you?

3. Share your sense of purpose and your doubts with your group. How do you throw stumbling blocks onto your own path? When do doubts hold more power than faith? What's your work-around?

4. How has pain taught you more about yourself, God, others, direction, and purpose? Where do you find comfort? How does 2 Corinthians 1:2–7 apply to you? How can you begin to apply it to your life and to others? God will not waste our pain, but longs for our pain to lead us to Christ for comfort.

5. Considering the character arc from Eden to now, what do you see about your own soul growth? Verbalize to the group or to your neighbor your direction, how you see God converting pain into purpose and how you hope to move forward.

6. Pray for each other in the group. If you're comfortable praying aloud, do so. There's something powerful about praying aloud for someone else and equally powerful about being prayed over, even if only in a few words.