

Not Forsaken

Individual and Group Discussion Guide

Chapter 1: Daddy, Watch Me!

1. Describe your earthly father. What specific words come to mind? Has your father's approval, affection, and attention been satisfied for you or does a longing for these mark your childhood?
2. How has your view of your earthly father colored how you envision your Heavenly Father?
3. Do you find yourself striving to earn your father's blessing? Desiring for him to watch you? To be proud of you? Does this carry over to a desire to perform for God the Father? Is there anything you can do to earn His unmerited favor?
4. What is the promise and the Good News about God as our Heavenly Father?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 6:18. What response does this verse elicit from you?

Chapter 2: The Most Important Thing About You

1. What is the most important thing about you? Was this a surprising realization to you? Why or why not?
2. What comes into your mind when you think of God? If you had a sketchpad in front of you, how would you draw His picture, as Louie discussed?
3. What is the significance of being made by Him and for Him?
4. What "motley crew" of gods have you chosen to view God the Father as in the past? What led to that understanding of Him?

Chapter 3: A God to Call Father

1. What was your response to Louie's story of the human eyes traveling just above seat 1B?
2. Have you ever considered that God is first and primarily a Father? What does this mean for how He sees us and how we respond to Him?
3. How was your dad a great dad? An imperfect dad?
4. How does your identity as a daughter or son of God propel you into greater purpose?

Chapter 4: Reflection versus Perfection

1. How do you see the fatherhood crisis play out in the lives of those around you? In your community?
2. Discuss the six different types of fathers. How have you seen different elements of these "fathers" throughout your life? Does your father fit squarely in one of the types?
3. Walk through each of the six fathers again and discuss how God is either opposite or a perfect example of each type.
4. Because we are in Christ, united through the cross, God is truly our perfect Father. How might each type be an example of what God is perfectly or what God is absolutely not?

Chapter 5: The Tale of Two Trees

1. What two trees are discussed in this chapter? Why do they matter?
2. How has God the Father worked to bring healing to your relationship with Him?
3. On page 93 Louie beautifully outlines our new identity as Christians. Which of the bulleted page 1 list sticks out most to you as your new identity?
4. How does God help us know that He understands our pain?

Chapter 6: Reverse the Curse

1. What do you know about your ancestry? Do you find researching your family's history interesting? Do you have access to this kind of information or is it obscured? Is it encouraging or heart-wrenching?
2. No matter who is included in your family tree and what they are or were like, if you are a Christian, God has grafted you in to a new tree. What must we do to receive this gift?
3. On page 110, Louie discusses God's blessing. He reminds us that God's love, blessing, goodness, and mercy cannot be exhausted or depleted. There is more than enough for us. What parts of your life might be hard to view as a blessing? How do you see God continuing to bless you today?
4. Is it difficult for you to forgive? What steps do you need to take today to forgive those who have wronged you or who have not been who you needed them to be? What curse do you need to reverse today?

Chapter 7: Discovering the Perfect Father

1. Have you ever felt like a failure or like you had really disappointed your family? How?
2. What brother in the story of the prodigal son do you most connect with: the son who squandered his inheritance, or the one who was self-righteous and angry when his wayward brother returned because he had never stopped faithfully working for his father? How do you see God's love in the father in the story?
3. Is it difficult for you to believe that God is always good and that His plan is always good for you? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever had experiences in life where you can look back and see that God has been in control all along? Louie had this when he realized that his dad designed the logo under the stage at the Passion conference, a great reminder that God has been working all along to remind Louie of His faithfulness.

Chapter 8: Appreciating the Flawless Father

1. How has God been a perfect Provider for you?
2. God the Father is not a reflection of our earthly fathers. He is a perfection of fatherhood. Think about the storyline of Scripture. In what ways do we see God as a perfect Father?
3. You've likely seen the meme of a child who has gotten in trouble and the two potential responses: "Oh no! My dad is going to kill me!" or "I messed up. I need to call my dad." Which response most reflects what you thought about God the Father before reading this book? Has that response changed?
4. What characteristic of God the Father most encouraged you in this chapter? Why?

Chapter 9: Growing Up Like Dad

1. Do you have a favorite picture with your dad? Describe it.
2. When we spend time with people, we pick up the way they say certain words or the way they cock their head to the side when confused. What mannerisms or habits did you pick up from your dad? What mannerisms or habits should we be picking up from our heavenly Father?
3. Jesus didn't die on the cross to make bad people good. Instead, He died on the cross to make dead people live again. In the moment that we trust Him for salvation, we have a new life and a new family. What has marked your life after Christ that was different before you came to know Him?
4. What does it mean to be free? Read the bulleted point list about your freedom in Christ on page 196. Which point resonates with you?

Chapter 10: Be Imitators of God

1. Why do you think it's a big deal that we can know God as His children?
2. Think about your vision of the perfect father. What would he do? How would your childhood be different?
3. Now consider God as the perfect Father, meeting every need, always present and engaged with you. How do we know what we should be imitating?
4. How long does maturing in our walk with God take? What is discipleship?

Epilogue: Your New Story Has Just Begun

1. Have you ever felt like doubting Thomas? When?
2. What did Jesus do for Thomas? How does that encourage you in seasons of doubt?
3. Who, outside of your biological family, reflects God's love to you? Give them a call or send them a message today to tell them about the important part they've played in your life.
4. How will your life be different because you have read this book?