



STUDY GUIDE

My objective in preparing this Study Guide is to give some questions that will be thought provoking and will lend themselves to group discussion. This book is one that shares from a vulnerable place and hopefully, will encourage that same type of openness and vulnerability within a trusted group setting.

You can use as little or as many of the questions that you like during your study time or in your small group. Of course, you can improvise and add anything that spoke particularly to you or stands out as something your group needs to consider or process.

My hope is to inspire people to truly live in a place where they are continually aware of God's kindness and favor toward them and thus, are readily willing and able to be ambassadors of those attributes toward others. We all know that is a worthy pursuit, but one that takes perseverance and courage.

Relationships are the most rewarding thing we experience in our lives. However, often they are also the most challenging and difficult to maintain. The things I've written in my book have been learned over a lifetime and are still very much in process. We will have ups and downs in these areas as long as we are living. But, each lesson learned is valuable and each relationship strengthened is so important. Not only will it yield joy and peace for you, but also for those who we influence with our particular

fragrance and personality. We are made in His image. When we are open to and apply His wisdom, He lives through us.

I love people – because I know and love God and have endeavored to believe Him explicitly when He tells me I am His beloved daughter. Left to my own, I would be at a loss to demonstrate any real or heartfelt love – I just am frail in that ability.

So, I hope that this book and this Study Guide will be a resource as you walk through this life as His beloved child and ambassador.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please contact me at:
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(Momala is the name my oldest grandchild chose to call me).

STUDY GUIDE FOR LOVE, LEADERSHIP & INFLUENCE

CHAPTER 1 – THE POWER OF A PURE CONSCIENCE

1. Is a consistently pure conscience possible? *Acts 24:16 "I do my best always to maintain a pure conscience both before God and before men"*
2. If a conscience can be described as a moral compass which approves or condemns a person's actions and affections, how consistently does your conscience communicate to you and how do you respond to your conscience?
3. The Biblical use of the term "conscience" is defined as "to see together with" or a "joint knowing". Who is this implying that we should "see together with"? How can we do that?
4. Do you allow God and His Word to process your sin and weaknesses with you or do you come to your own conclusions? How has this impacted your life thus far?
5. What is the difference between a blameless conscience and being sinless?
6. Do you believe guilt will help you to be a better person/Christian?
7. Is your perception/experience with your own father having an impact on your perception of God as a father in your life? If so, in what way?
8. How much have you let disappointments in your life and the lives of others define God in your thinking?
9. Is there a better way to bring truth and consistency to what you believe about God's character and His characterization of you than by observing circumstances around you? What is that way?
10. Write a synopsis of your overall perception of how God sees you and what your relationship with Him looks like. Include at least two Bible verses to substantiate that perspective.

11. What is the most effective way to become more like Jesus?

12. How would your day-to-day life changed if you realized/believed/acted like you lived under the smile of your Father always?

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CHAPTER 2 – THE POWER OF FAITH

1. What does the Bible cite as the attribute most vital to please God? Write out the verse that communicates that.
2. There is a way that God tells us in II Peter that we can become more like Him – become partakers of His divine nature. What is that way?
3. So, in light of that, how can we approach any situation in our lives – no matter how trying or challenging – and find ourselves internally changing and also seeing answers to our prayers?
4. What does faith look like in your personal life – how is it practically applied to every-day life issues?
5. How can falsely charging or blaming God for tragedy, hurtful situations, personal struggles, inhibit our ability to have faith?
6. Give two Bible verses that communicate that God is not the one responsible for the destructive, negative and ruinous situations that come to us and others?
7. List three characteristics about God's personality, nature and character that we must truly and unwaveringly believe (make in personal in relationship to you, i.e. "*God is always trustworthy in my life*") in order to be able to have a living and life-changing faith.

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CHAPTER 3 – THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

1. Are we always aware of unforgiveness in our lives?
2. Give 3 or 4 indicators (cat scans/lab reports) that there may be hidden unforgiveness or bitterness in our hearts?
3. Biblically, is forgiveness toward others optional?
4. Give two Biblical references to back up that answer.
5. Is forgiveness always linked to relational restoration? Why or why not?
6. Are there any relationships in your life that have been set aside or where you have put a “you are superfluous to my life” check mark next to their name?
7. Have you walked out a proactive and deliberate process of forgiveness toward people who have offended you and/or hurt you?
8. What is the difference between *appraisal* and *judgment*? What verse clearly refers to appraisal?
How do we properly appraise a person’s behavior(s)?
How do we know when we have crossed over to judgment?
9. Are there any over-arching judgments you have toward a particular group of people (i.e. men, women, church leaders, certain racial or national backgrounds)?
10. How can we change our perspective, while still being discerning?
11. Write down a plan/process whereby you can be proactive and forgive, release and bless those who you are retaining unforgiveness or bitterness toward.
12. Are there any of those persons that you need to make a proactive step to communicate with or reach out to?

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CHAPTER 4 – THE POWER OF EMBRACING OTHERS

1. Talk about what it looks like to be embracing.
2. Proverbs 19:22 says, "What is desirable in a man is his kindness." How has that played out in your life, i.e. how have you been impacted by someone through their kindness or how have you impacted others through kindness?
3. What can we learn from Paul's comments, in I Thessalonians 2, when he says that he was "*gentle among them, even as a nursing mother who tenderly cares for her own children*"?
4. A favorite verse of mine, Proverbs 3:3 & 4 says, "*Do not let kindness and truth leave you. Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.*"

In your own words, how does that play out in your relationships?

5. How do we merge kindness and truth effectively?
6. Must we ignore or turn a blind eye to every inappropriate action or behavior on the part of others if we are to walk in kindness? If not, what is our response to be in those situations?

(This is a difficult question, because every situation is different and we do not have a mandate to correct everyone around us and every behavior we deem as inappropriate).

So, perhaps try to think of a situation where we are demonstrating "kindness and truth" in a way that speaks out.

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CHAPTER 5 – THE POWER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

1. I Thessalonians 5:11 *"Encourage one another and build each other up..."*

1. How does encouragement bring courage to others in practical ways?
(Affirmation overcomes hesitation)

2. What choices have you made that were aided by the encouragement of another?

3. Which forms of encouragement are you most built up by?

- *Affection

- *Personal attention (including someone listening well to you)

- *Personal acts of service on your behalf

- *Gifts

- *Words of sincere affirmation

- *Others

4. Which forms of encouragement do you most often employ in your relationships?

5. In what ways or areas do you think you could better endeavor to be an encourager?

6. Is there someone in your life that you would like to be purposely encouraging to at this point in time?

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CHAPTER 6 – THE POWER OF LOYALTY

1. Because loyalty is often demonstrated in situations of conflict and in trying times, how can we choose loyalty instead of perhaps being influenced to participate in the offense or gossip of others?
2. Describe how David's loyalty to Saul can be emulated in our attitudes toward others (friends, leaders, co-workers, bosses, family, etc.).
3. Proverbs 20:6 *"Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?"*

What does being a trustworthy person look like in your life toward others?

4. In what ways would you like to see people demonstrate trustworthiness to you?
5. Does loyalty require that we reinstate a relationship back to a former status or place? Why or why not?
6. In what type of situations would loyalty allow distance or lack of personal relationship to be the proper choice?
7. Can we still be loyal in relationships where people disagree with us politically, theologically, or where they have perhaps made moral choices we disagree with?
8. How does that play out?
9. How can gossip be disguised as concern?
10. How can we redirect gossip and bring redemptive appraisal to bear in conversations?
11. In what ways can we personally learn and practice the art of loyalty more effectively?

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CHAPTER 7 – THE POWER OF UNITY

1. Philippians 2:2 *"Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose"*.

Is this legitimately attainable within a church body?

2. Is it something that just happens without intervention, leadership, vision, and perseverance?

3. Is it appropriate for a pastor, small group leader, etc. to call people up to this standard and to appropriately challenge those who resist such an effort via gossip, dissention, complaining, quarreling, and other disruptive actions?

4. How can you be a participant in this type of objection or goal and even help to create this DNA within your church?

5. How does unity, as described in Philippians 2:2, create a refuge for people who are hurting and who have been treated harshly in other environments?

6. How can your small group, as a team, help create this dynamic?

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CHAPTER 8 – THE POWER OF PURSUIT

1. Psalm 23:6 *"Surely His goodness and steadfast love will pursue me relentlessly all the days of my life."*

Relentlessly – determined, unflinching, unyielding.

Does God ask us to pursue relationships in a similar fashion?

2. If you are aware of a schism that should be addressed between you and another individual, should you take personal responsibility for bringing a resolution if possible? i.e. even if a long-term relationship is unlikely or impossible, are there people in your life that you could or should pursue for the purpose of making sure there is peace and forgiveness between you?

3. Similar question but worded another way: Are there people who have offended you who are now on your "superfluous list" that need to be pursued in a more obvious way?

4. Should friendships be discovered purely through a "let's see what happens" or "I'll let them reach out to me" attitude?

5. How can we be more purposeful in pursuing relationships?

6. Are you reluctant to pursue relationships because of personal insecurity?

7. How can God's Word help you to become more fearless in these endeavors?

9. Should you pursue people who **you** have been harsh or unkind to? Why?

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CHAPTER 9 – THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY

1. Does vulnerability mean you tell people all your shortcomings and sins and weaknesses?
2. Describe what genuine vulnerability looks like? (page 95 if you need help)
3. Do you feel the requirement to be perfect and without frailties as a Christian or as a leader?
4. What does Paul say, in II Corinthians 12:9 about being weak?
5. What is an appropriate way to be vulnerable while using discretion?
6. What are some ways that we can help one another with our weaknesses and struggles when we are willing to be vulnerable?
7. Is there a possibility that vulnerability can open a door for criticism?
8. If done appropriately, is it worth it to risk that possibility?
9. How is being secretive or closed off to people unhealthy?
10. How can we know the right people to be open with about our deepest struggles?

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CHAPTER 10 – THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

1. Proverbs 17:17 says, *“A friend loves at all times.”*

Do you feel as though you have genuine friends?

2. How has that enriched your life?

3. Because God repeatedly refers to us as His friends, what does that say to you about the importance of friendship?

4. Have you set up inappropriate boundaries in your mind or heart in regard to those who feel you cannot or should not consider your friends? (not referring to those who are abusive, dangerous, destructive, etc.)

5. Does friendship require lengthy amounts of time together or regular phone or in person visits?

6. What is the heart of friendship? What does friendship mean to you?

7. Can we be true and close friends with our grown children?

8. What perspective might we need to adjust in order to be close and valuable friends to our grown children?

9. What characteristics or attributes might we need to evaluate or consider in our lives that would make us better, more loyal, more embracing friends?

10. Romans 12:9 & 10 *“Love from the center of who you are. Don’t fake it...Be good friends who love deeply.”*

Are you loving from the center of who you are without faking it or have you put walls up based on fear, insecurity, unforgiveness, etc?

How can you begin to move closer to the place of loving from the center of who you are?

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CHAPTER 11 – THE POWER OF A TEAM

1. Why is it important to have a cohesive team alongside you in any worthwhile endeavor you are tasked with?
2. Are good, cohesive teams just a lucky coincidence or are they a result of training, pursuit, perseverance, and an unwavering practice of forgiveness and love? Explain.
3. If you are leading a team, how can you lead in such a way as to create unity, same love, same purpose/vision? (practical ways)
4. If you are a part of a team someone else is leading, how can you be a vital, fruitful, devoted member of that team? (practical ways)
5. I used the acronym T.R.E.E.S. – taken from Isaiah 61:4 – to describe qualities that should be present in any member of a team, including the leader. In keeping with that:
 - A. What does it look like to be *teachable*?
 - B. What does it look like to be restored or to be willing to be restored?
 - C. What does it look like to be established?
 - D. What does it look like to be equipped?
 - E. What does it look like to have a willingness to serve?
6. Are you willing to adopt these attitudes in order to be an instrumental part of a team?
7. If you are a leader or a member of a team, how can you stay on the same page with your husband (and family as well) about the responsibilities, vision, etc. involved in your role as leader or member of a particular ministry or team?
8. Are you willing to promptly deal with any offense or schism within your team (between you and another member) in order to stay in sync and

follow Philippians 2 (same mind, same love, united in spirit, with same purpose)?

9. Are there any issues that are in your life or heart currently that would hinder your ability to fully participate in being a team member?