

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

The following questions, arranged by chapter, can be used a number of ways. A facilitator may choose to use them solely to initiate group discussion of the chapter's contents. Or she might want to assign a question or more for a writing assignment, either in response to her group's discussion or prior to the group discussion. A third option is to use the questions both ways – some for oral response and some for written response.

### **Chapter One**

#### *“A Love That’s Out Of This World: Knowing That God Really Loves Me”*

1. Do you remember your “first love”? Take a few minutes to recall his/her face, peculiar quirks, hair color and texture, favorite words or foods or things to do with you. What do you think specifically drew you to this person? What do you think it was that drove you apart (besides recess)? What do you think might happen were you to meet up again this week?
2. Gary Sivewright poses the hypothetical yet real question: “If \_\_\_\_\_ can’t love me, then how can God love me?” Using scripture references or lines from favorite hymns, let God answer that question for you: “How do I love you? Let me count the ways...”
3. Those Greeks have a different word for everything. They classify three different kinds of love: philo, eros and agape. Using a good-sized dictionary or a Bible dictionary or commentary, define each of those words and give an example, either by writing down a person’s name or describing an act or event, for each or those kinds of love. Which kind of love seems most important to you at this stage of your life? What kind of love does God call His disciples to show to one another?
4. Try to recall a crisis in your life when those around you held you up to the throne of God and with His care and their prayers, you made it through. Describe the circumstances and some of the people involved in your “rescue.” What lessons did you learn from the experience?
5. Love and loyalty and solid relationships are all built on trust. How is trust developed between two people? How is that trust broken? Can it be mended? If so, how? If not, why not? Why do Christians trust God? How is that trust developed and nurtured?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Two

#### *“And Now A Word From Our Sponsor – Developing a Christian Identity*

1. What do people say about you? Much of our identity and feeling of self-worth center on the comments we hear others making about us. Make a list of the people who have had the biggest impact on you over the past few years – teachers, pastors, coaches, bosses, parents, siblings, relatives, etc. Next to each of their names, write down the kinds of things you’ve heard them say about you, either to you directly or to others. How did you respond to those words?
2. Why aren’t you perfect? Many of us think that we might be more lovable if we were perfect. As children, we sought our parents’ attention by striving for “perfection.” In school, we wanted to be the best in the classroom or on the playing field. In relationships, we think we can get the perfect guy or girl if we are the perfect girl or guy. Recall some methods you’ve tried to reach this mythical level of perfection. How did it work out for you?
3. What are your “weaknesses”? What are your “strengths”? How do you know what qualifies as a weakness and what qualifies as a strength? How have you sought to overcome one or two of those weaknesses (assuming, of course, you have one or two)? (If you’re having trouble thinking of your weaknesses, just ask your roommate to point them out for you.) How have you sought to cultivate and build on your strengths? What does the Bible say are universal weaknesses and strengths of men and women?
4. If that Hallmark card is true -- “We’re not getting older; we’re getting better” -- then where do you picture yourself in a year? Five years? Twenty years? Think in terms of emotionally, spiritually and psychologically. How are you getting “better” as you mature into adulthood and spiritual discipling? Where do you see growth already taking place? Where do you think God is calling you to a more mature relationship with him?
5. We are all assigned a mission in life, a way of life that builds His Kingdom. He doesn’t really “call” us to be mechanics or teachers or lawyers or even preachers in a way that wakes us up one morning to a radio station that says, “Johnny Boy! Be a theater usher!” God does a lot more “tapping” than he does “zapping.” As you assess your gifts and deep-seated desires, what do you think your “mission” is in life?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Three**

#### ***“Not My Will But Yours – Discovering God’s Will For Your Life”***

1. Before digging too deeply into the question, “What is God’s will for my life?” perhaps it would be good for you to decide “What is MY will for my life?” Along with that, consider the question, “What is my culture’s will for my life?” It might be productive, as well, to ask, “What is my parents’ will for my life?”
2. Dean Blevins, the writer of this chapter, says that “We have to first consider what God is about before we focus on what we’re to become!” Let’s take a minute to do that. By looking at your Bible’s concordance or perhaps even a Bible encyclopedia, try to identify what “God is about.” What characteristics does He demonstrate? What are His priorities? What delights Him? What concerns Him? What makes Him “tick”?
3. According to Ephesians 5, Christians are to be “wise, sober, Spirit-filled, thankful., self-submissive and reverent.” How do you define each of those six characteristics? Can you illustrate each of those with an experience in your own life or experiences of others that you’ve read or heard about? What are the antonyms of those Christian characteristics? Are those terms and traits more recognizable or common in the world?
4. Paul may have been the first Christian to ask the question, “What would Jesus do?” (And you thought your bracelet was a novel idea!) Dean Blevins says, “cultivating and living out virtues that are consistent with Jesus.” What are Jesus Christ’s “virtues”? Read Matthew 5-7, “The Sermon on the Mount,” and see if you can make a list of Christlike virtues.
5. Make a list of the three or four careers you’d love most. After each one, first explain why that career choice is ideal to you; then describe how you could use that career to “live worshipfully,” building His Kingdom in heaven instead of your own little realm here on earth

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Four**

#### *“The Legend of Mae Kuppermind – Making Decisions That Please God”*

1. Are you in the habit of making lists of things to do, whether personal agendas or homework schedules or other “appointments to be kept”? Who helped or forced you into that practice? How do you decide which items are important and which are urgent – and how are those two criteria different?
2. In the form of questions, make a brief list of questions you use to decide whether a potential action falls into “the will of God.” For instance, do you ask, “How will this benefit another human being?” or “What will I get out of this?” or “Is this something I can see Jesus doing?”
3. In this chapter, Mae is told to “[j]ust pray about it. God will help you,” whenever she is faced with a decision, big or small. Mae’s response is “I have! Lots! But I still don’t know! God just hasn’t given me a clear answer.” What is the purpose of prayer in these situations, especially in light of Jesus’ words in Matthew 6: “...don’t you think he will attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? [D]on’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes”?
4. What are some of the promises of God that you rely on when you are faced with a seemingly important decision? Make a list right here and put the scriptural reference next to it in order to share it with someone else. Look up some of those promises in other versions or transliterations and see how others have interpreted those same scriptures.
5. Let’s do what Tyler Blake, the writer of this chapter, suggests. Think of an important decision you’re facing or will be facing sooner enough. “Write down a list of 10 pros and cons [ten of each or ten total – it doesn’t really matter], and then put a number beside each of these items, 1-10, with 1 meaning “This isn’t a very important factor” and 10 meaning “This factor is huge.” Add up the two columns and see which one has a higher score. Be prepared to share what you’ve concluded after looking at your list.

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Five

#### *“What Color Are Your Goggles? – Choosing A Christian Worldview”*

1. Kim Follis, the writer of this chapter, suggests that our worldviews are amalgamations of great influences upon us: “parents, friends, teachers, movies and books, among other things.” And let’s throw in “church” and “school.” Perhaps before you get much further into this chapter, it would be good for you to make a list of the 10 most influential forces in your life so far. Next to each name or title, write out one viewpoint or theme that was passed on to you.
2. What is your “philosophy of life”? You may want to make a brief list of various and random statements that make up your overall philosophy, or you may prefer to write complete sentences and organized paragraphs, kind of like those essays you’ve been writing non-stop since you landed on campus. Think in terms to those things that get you excited, keep you motivated, make you feel purposeful, bring you contentment, challenge you to be better, stronger, more mature and more responsible.
3. Now might be a good time to re-read Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7 or Luke 6 for the Reader’s Digest version). After you finish studying these great truths, see if you can articulate Christ’s “worldview or “philosophy of life.” What is important to the Master, and conversely, what is unimportant? Afterwards, ask yourself which worldviews or philosophies are shared by your culture; which ones are antithetical to your culture?
4. Which of the beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-10) fits into your “worldview” or “philosophy of life” the best? Giving an illustration, either from your experience or reading, or even a future scenario, how might that beatitude (have) become a reality in your life?
5. Looking back, what have you changed your mind about in the last few weeks? How about in the last few months? How about the last few years? What did you used to believe and what do you believe now? What changed your mind?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Six

#### *“The ‘Joy’ Of Suffering – Where Is God When Suffering And Evil Occur?”*

1. If you haven't asked God, “Why?” yet, you have not fully suffered. That is often the first thing to exit one's mind when tragedy or evil occurs: “Why him?” “Why me?” “Why here?” “Why now?” Recall a time in your life when either you or someone to whom you feel close asked God “Why?”
2. The writer of this chapter, Diane LeClerc, suggests we read the book of Job or the stories of persecution and suffering in the Bible and ask in those contexts, “Where was God?” Certainly Job asked the question. Even God's Son, Jesus, asked “Why have you forsaken me?” when He was going through His darkest moment. Why do we wonder where God is when we suffer? Why do we blame Him for our suffering? Do we really expect to go through life without suffering? Ever?
3. Jesus says, “Blessed are those people who grieve...” (Matthew 5: 4) and “Blessed are those people who are treated badly for doing right...” (Matthew 5: 10). Paul says, “In spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit “ (I Thessalonians 1: 6). James says, “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials...” (James 1: 2). Everybody suffers; even Christians suffer, and suffering is never joyous. How and when does the joy come out of the suffering?
4. Looking back at your response to the first question, what was the lesson learned from the suffering? Can learning a lesson be equated with “joy”? How? How does wisdom come out of suffering? Do you “believe strongly that God causes suffering as a part of His great plan, that in the end it will all make sense”? Give a couple of reasons for your answer to that question.
5. How would your concept of God change if you believed His Son, Jesus, never really suffered?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Seven

#### *“With A Friend Like This... -- Cultivating A Relationship With God”*

1. Think of the best friend you have ever had when you consider the following questions. How did you meet? What was your first impression? What was his/hers of you? Which one of you initiated the repeated contacts that bore a friendship? What similarities of personalities or worldviews do you share? What are the differences between you that make the friendship interesting? What is one occasion when he/she really came through for you and you knew you needed this friendship? What was the worst moment or time in your friendship, when it almost broke? How did you get through it and recover the relationship?
2. The writer of this chapter, Jim Wilcox, quotes A. J. Russell from his book, *God Calling*, “Be calm. Do not get worried.” What do you tend to worry about these days? We all know it’s much easier to tell someone, “don’t worry, be happy,” than it is to replace worry with instant happiness. How do you personally handle fretting? Think, perhaps, of a specific moment of fear or worry.
3. Trust is at the very center of all meaningful relationships. Without trust as the foundation, no relationship can withstand the winds and quakes of life in our society. How is trust in a relationship developed and nurtured? If that trust is broken, can it ever be fully restored? Do you have any examples to illustrate your answers?
4. It’s easy these days to live in fear. Just watch the late news on your local television station tonight and go to bed as soon as it’s over. Doesn’t it seem like “If it bleeds, it leads” is the motto of all newscasts today? As a result, we put four locks on our doors, equip our cars with alarms and buy handguns at record-breaking rates. Our culture has addressed this paranoia with prescription drugs, just so we can cope with our fears and anxieties. What are some of the phobias you know about among your friends? What are five things you do or don’t do because of fear?
5. Wilcox shares with you a brief characterization of Paul Patrick, who seems to be content with a crewcut that comes back into style every 30 years. Who is the most content, Christlike person you know? Draw a word-characterization of him/her. What seems important to him/her? What is completely unimportant? How is this person “in the world but not of the world”?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Eight

#### *“An Expression Of God’s Love – Making And Keeping Good Friends”*

1. Lots is said these days about “forgiveness” and “reconciliation.” Marriages dissolve because of alleged “irreconcilable differences.” The Bible is very clear that to have a wholesome, holy relationship with God, we must have a humble, merciful relationship with all people. (Look up “Mercy” and “Forgiveness” in your concordance or Bible dictionary.) Why do you think forgiveness is so difficult for human beings? What stands in the way of total forgiveness? Why is forgiveness such an integral part of “keeping good friends”?
2. What do you get from your friendships? What do you give to your friendships? Do you think it’s more important to “get” things from a friendship or to “give” things to a friendship? Why? How have your friendships helped you to develop your self-image?
3. Most of us have lost friends over the years. Think back to some of those relationships that somehow, somewhere, sometime just disappeared and went away. What caused those friendships to become unimportant to you? Was it a single act or a slow process? What regrets might you still have with one or two of those lost friendships?
4. The writer of this chapter, Diane LeClerc, lists seven characteristics of a long-lasting relationship: shared interests, commitment, reciprocity (look it up!), trustworthiness, authenticity, spiritual nurture and virtue. After reading what LeClerc says about all seven attributes, put them in the order of importance you consider them and prepare to share why you put #1 there and #7 there. Can you think of an eighth or ninth characteristic?
5. The parallel being drawn in this unit, of course, is the relationship we have with Christ. Using LeClerc’s seven characteristics, see if you can illustrate how each fits your relationship with Jesus.



# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Nine**

#### ***“The New Rules – Keeping Dating Relationships Pure”***

1. If you were to characterize “sex” in today’s culture (including media), what seem to be the eight or ten premises set forth? Where do you see each of those being delivered? Who are the “worst offenders”?
2. As a Christian sexual being, how do you address each of those eight or ten suppositions you listed in question one? If you have scripture that applies to your responses, use them and include the reference so others can read them, too.
3. Of the four “rules” listed by the writer, Gary Sivewright, which one do you question or struggle with the most? Why do you suppose that is? Is there a fifth “rule” Sivewright seems to have ignored?
4. This might take some interviews (but what a great excuse for a cheap date, huh?), but see if you can find out the differences between young men and young women when it comes to perceptions about dating, the opposite sex, and the role of sex, itself, in a healthy relationship.
5. The movies and TV shows of today seem to tell us that guys give love to gain sex and girls give sex to gain love. Obviously, this is an overgeneralization, but many Christian young people tend to agree with both ideas. What are your thoughts on those two statements?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Ten**

#### ***“Students Are Not The Weakest Link – Developing Relationships With Your Professors”***

1. Most of us think that teachers have their “pets,” their favorite students; most of us also have had a favorite teacher or two down through the academic years. It may not have always seemed fair, but it is a reality, nonetheless. Who has been your favorite teacher? What did you really like about him? What made her different from all the others? How did your performance in school change because of him? What did she say to you that seemed to “turn it around” for you?
2. This might be an imaginative exercise. Your teachers used to be your age, you know. Hard to believe but true. Make a list of your current teachers and describe what kind of students/kids they used to be when they were your age. What did she used to do on weekends? What was his worst subject/class? Where did she work to pay her tuition bills? What kind of ministry group did he participate in? What was dorm life like back then? What did people do on dates? What kind of music did she listen to? What was his favorite movie?
3. Using names from each of the preceding questions, even adding names if you’d like, what “truth” have you learned or are you learning from these teachers? This is not asking you to repeat course curriculum or test questions: this is asking what these individuals have taught you about life and living fully.
4. If you were in a course that simply asked questions instead of always seeking answers or principles or concepts or ideas, what are some of the questions you would want your professors to address? In other words, what are some of the questions you have that can’t be answered from a textbook or video series but can be answered only through the wisdom of experience?
5. If you were to write a job description of the perfect university professor, what would it read like? What tasks are most important in day-by-day life of a professor?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Eleven

#### *“Family Ties – Staying Connected To Your Family”*

1. Right now, most students still get homesick. Maybe not every weekend like it was at first, but every now and then, you get the hunger pangs that only Mom’s cooking or Dad’s sense of humor can satisfy. What do you miss most about home? Come up with at least three things that you can describe to others so they begin to miss them, too, even though they might not have otherwise ever experienced them.
2. What was the main point of friction between you and your parents as you were growing up at home? Is it still there? If not, why not? How did you resolve it? If it is still there, has time and distance helped the healing to begin or made it even worse? Why do you suppose that is?
3. The writer of this chapter, Jan Lanham, asks a series of pertinent questions that maybe you should now take the time to explore: “Have you taken the time to really know your parents? Do you know what they think about issues? Do you know what interests them? Do you know their likes and dislikes? Do you know the ways in which you’re similar to your parents as well as the ways in which you’re very different?”
4. What are some “mistakes” your parents made in raising you? What methods or principles did they use on you that you will NEVER use on your own kids? Conversely, what are some of the traditions that your parents passed down to you that you definitely see yourself repeating with your own children?
5. Lanham shares six principles for keeping the communication lines with family wide open and heated up. If you were to put them in order of importance, what would that list look like? Which item seems to be the easiest for you to follow? Which one seems the most difficult? Now write a commitment statement that includes at least one of those strategies: “This month, I will \_\_\_\_\_.”

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Twelve

#### *“Lessons From The Weakest Link – Balancing Freedom and Responsibility”*

1. This chapter is all about our ability to have choices. In fact, when people from other countries are asked to describe America, the number one answer is “You’re free.” In your opinion, what are the five most important or incredible or enjoyable freedoms you have?
2. As the writer of this chapter, Kim Follis, suggests, every one of those freedoms you listed in question 1 entails a choice and a responsibility. What is your primary responsibility associated with each of those freedoms? Who most benefits by those freedoms? Who suffers the most?
3. In our culture, we exercise our individual freedoms as far as we can until they bump into or plow right over someone else’s individual freedom. For instance, I can play my car stereo as loud as I want to (I prefer “STUN”) until the volume bumps into someone else’s freedom of silence or solitude. Where else do you see two freedoms colliding like this? See if you can come up with five such “collisions.”
4. Ironically, we all have the Constitutional right to worship how and where we want, but most churches try to remove absolute individual freedoms in light of corporate fellowship and understanding. For instance, the government says I can smoke and drink, but many religions frown on such practices. Equally, the world tells us that greed is how we get ahead in life, but the church condemns such self-centeredness. How do you personally reconcile this ironic dichotomy (look it up)? Where do you think the church is “wrong” in taking away your personal freedom?
5. The world is hedonistic: “If it feels good, do it.” Where do you see that portrayed most blatantly? The Word is benevolent: “If it helps someone, do it.” Where do you see that sort of behavior most often? How do you reconcile the two messages in your own life?

# Dorm Room Devotions

Discussion and Response Questions

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### ***“God’s Rescue Squad – Having A Heart For The Lost”***

1. This chapter is introduced with a wonderful quote from Karla Worley. As you look around you this week and last, whose feet did you see carrying God? Whose mouth delivered his message of the day? Whose hands did God’s touching? Whose heart showed God’s love to someone? If you want to get really personal, can you think of four instances recently when you were His feet, mouth, hands and heart?
2. Most of us are much more comfortable giving our witness on paper, maybe even in a private journal, than we are speaking it to a stranger or a non-believer. This is your opportunity right here: what does being a Christian mean to you? How has your life changed because the label “Christian” had been attached to your name? What has Jesus taught you that the world could never teach you? What words now characterize your life? What is the Great Commission of your life?
3. Evangelism is a big word we throw around these days to define our witness. We have evangelists come to our churches to hold evangels...errr, I mean, revivals. We see evangelism campaigns on television. But when we really study the life of Jesus, we see Him ministering in a number of ways but almost always one-on-one. In your view, what are both some effective and ineffective ways of winning the lost for Christ? How were you led to Christ? What methods have been spiritual “turn-offs”?
4. Maturity brings confidence. Most of us are far more confident now than we were last year or four years ago or 20 years ago. We’ve become more aware of strengths and weaknesses and we play up the former while downplaying the latter. By so doing, we appear to know what we’re doing most of the time. How can you apply this basic principle of life to your spiritual life of witnessing? Who are the most “confident witnesses” you know? What makes them so confident and bold?
5. The world teaches us that if we choose Christ, we have to give up a lot of life’s pleasures; in other words, following Christ restricts our individual freedoms. On the other hand, becoming a Christian is even more liberating. What are some of the world’s restraints and restrictions that are loosed when we turn our lives over to God? What burdens do we no longer bear?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Fourteen**

#### ***“Doing It – Understanding God’s Call On My Life”***

1. In many ways, this chapter is a lot like chapter three, in which we explored God’s will for our lives. How do “God’s will” and “God’s call” mean the same thing? How are they different? Is a “call” more aligned with a career choice? One wise man has said that “a mission is an ambition dedicated to God.” Can you give an example of someone’s ambition turning into a mission for her/his life? What is one of your life’s ambitions? How can you make sure that becomes your life’s mission?
2. In the questions that followed chapter three, you were asked to list three careers you’d love to have in your life, jobs so attractive you’d almost do them for free. This time, let’s make that list more “evangelistic.” What are three personal ministries you would love to do so you could become God’s feet, hands, mouth and heart?
3. Recall an event or trip or moment in your life when you were as close to “being Jesus” to someone as you’ve ever been. How did you get to that place or time? What did it feel like to step outside yourself and do the Master’s bidding? What were the results, not only to your own spiritual development but also to the people you were serving?
4. Most of us have mastered some skill, whether it’s retaining what we read, hitting a fastball over the centerfield wall, playing “Clair de Lune” on the piano or rebuilding a 1969 Ford Mustang. What is one skill that sets you apart from most people in your group? How did you acquire that skill? Who nurtured and mentored you? Why is that ability now such a part of who you are? How have you used it as a “calling”?
5. Write a prayer to your Heavenly Father, expressing your desire to hear His call on your life and to follow it. Tell him your biggest fears in doing that? Ask him for the courage and ability to fulfill your Mission.

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Fifteen**

#### ***“From Our Hearts To Our Hands – Developing A Compassionate Lifestyle”***

1. This is a project for you in the next couple of days: get to know your “neighbors.” For this exercise, let’s say the people in the two rooms next to yours and the two rooms across the hall from you are your neighbors. Find out the following information on each neighbor: full name; high school mascot; favorite TV program; favorite musical group; personal “theme verse” in the Bible; one thing they don’t have but really want; one thing they don’t have but really need; the person they miss the most, etc.
2. If someone walked into your classroom today or your church this coming Sunday and announced in a powerful voice, “I am the Son of God,” would you believe him? Why/not? What would you need from him to believe he was who he said he was? Can we blame the skeptics of Jesus’ day who questioned His credibility and authenticity?
3. The writer of this chapter, dian LeClerc, asks you which of the characters in the parable of the good Samaritan you are. Maybe you’ve been each character in different and separate situations. Write about one of them.
4. As LeClerc says, “compassion” has almost become a cliché these days. What are some of the typical ways people interpret compassion? When you think of the word, you automatically think of the incident when you saw it being shown most dramatically. Have you been shown compassion lately? Explain the details by which that came about.
5. Write down five “blessings” you have received over the years. What have you done to bless others with those blessings? Leclerc suggests that we are to show love and grace because we have been loved and graced. Blessings that are not passed on or forward become curses. How can you make sure that doesn’t happen to you?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Sixteen

#### *“An Attitude Of Gratitude And Faithfulness – Being Involved In The Local Church”*

1. What are some tasks, jobs, titles you’ve had in your own local church(es) over the years? Which did you enjoy the most? Why? Which did you not enjoy? Why not? If you could custom design your own personal ministry in a church near your university, what would it be? Why is it “the ministry” for you?
2. If you have attended a local church fellowship for any length of time, then you have been on the receiving end of someone’s service – pastors, teachers, musicians, greeters, ushers, etc. Who are the people at your church who serve God with the “biggest hearts”? What do you think motivates them?
3. You ought to let one or two or all of those people in #2 know that they have ministered to you. Thank them in a personal note. Either hand-deliver it to them this Sunday or find their home address and mail it to them.
4. Back in the 1960s, people known as “hippies” and “flower children” gathered in communes – small, independent or co-dependent communities – where they raised their own food, shared in child-rearing responsibilities and pooled what resources they had. They thought they were creating a Utopia of sorts. As you read Acts 2, how is that early church similar to and different from the communes of the 1960s? How is your university similar to and different from the church in Acts 2? How is your local church similar to and different from the Acts 2 church? How about your neighborhood?
5. the writer of this chapter, Dean Blevins, says, “Faithful discipleship shapes us into Christian maturity by disciplining our practices of faith through prayer, fasting, Scripture-reading and righteous living.” How do you respond to that? What do you think Blevins is saying?



# Dorm Room Devotions

Discussion and Response Questions

## Chapter Seventeen

### *“Wrap A Towel Around Your Waist – Seeing Your Campus As A Ministry Opportunity”*

1. First Peter 4:7-11 is a powerful admonition that in many ways parallels Christ’s Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Write out these seven sentences that are quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Under each sentence, write the parallel statements you find in Matthew 5-7, comparing Peter’s words to Jesus’ instructions.
2. Because we are terribly busy – maybe too busy – we fly right past our opportunities to serve. Then at night, if we’re not too tired or sleepy or *busy*, we can look back and see some of these blown chances to minister. As you reflect, what are two or three chances you’ve ignored recently? As you look ahead, what are two or three opportunities you see in your day or week when you can serve someone else?
3. The writer of this chapter, Gary Sivewright, develops the Bible’s simile of the church as a body by using the illustration of falling down on a basketball court. He might have also asked if Michael Jordan would have been as great at basketball as he was if he hadn’t played with Scottie Pippen; or if Babe Ruth would have hit as many homeruns if Lou Gehrig hadn’t hit behind him; or if Jerry Rice would have been the best receiver without Joe Montana and Steve Young. The point is, the church is both a body and a team, and each of our gifts complements the others. Can you think of another analogy that illustrates this biblical truth?
4. It’s easy to read that in the Kingdom, “the first shall be last, the last first”; it’s quite another to apply it to real, everyday life. As it may be at the very heart of the gospel, however, it would seem important for each of us to understand it in practical terms. So, for a few minutes, write down everyday situations in which you might be able to reflect that truth – that the first (on earth) will be last (in the next life, but the last (by the world’s standards) will be first (by heaven’s standards).
5. Washing one another’s feet used to be an act of humility, but in today’s world of running shoes and loafers and cross-trainers and boots, people don’t wash each other’s feet very often, except symbolically on retreats. What would be a good modern day example of an act of humility? Explain how it might represent the same type of service.

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Eighteen**

#### ***“Jesus Thrown Everything Off Balance – Living A Life Of Service”***

1. This chapter lays out several “worldly ethics” that are contradicted by our Master. When the world says “power,” Jesus says “humility.” When the world says “first,” Jesus says “last.” When the world says “get,” Jesus says “give.” When the world says “vengeance,” Jesus says “forgiveness.” As you search your heart and study Scripture, what are some other reversals you see?
2. It’s easy for most of us to make friends with the popular kid on campus, the one with the perfect clothes, car, GPA and body. It’s much harder to befriend the outcast who doesn’t fit in anywhere on campus. But as Scripture tells us, the outcast might be an angel in thrift clothes and off-brand tennis shoes. When you look around your campus, in your classrooms, in chapel, in the cafeteria, in the dorm, who is the “loner” who seems the loneliest? Who’s the guy your group of “cool” friends makes fun of? How do you know that’s not Jesus, just waiting for you to make the first move?
3. Whenever we consider doing something we know we shouldn’t do, one of the most important parts of our plans is the escape route. Nobody wants to get caught because then there are consequences that we probably won’t like. What if we used that same stealth when it came to doing something we know we *should* do? What sort of campus would yours be if all kind acts, all service projects, all mission trips were done with no names? What if there were no rewards or honors or tax breaks for humble compassion?
4. The writer of this chapter, Jim Wilcox, writes about the generosity of his friend, Stan Toler. Think of a person who has demonstrated this kind of blind generosity. What do you suppose motivates that person? Why does she/he find such joy in *giving* when the rest of the world is content only in *getting*?
5. When we were kids, we all wanted to become invisible (particularly if we had done “a bad thing” and Dad was on his way home). It just seemed cool to be able to walk through rooms without anybody knowing we were there. First off, go ahead and get it out of your system: if you were invisible, where would you go and what would you do? Now, you feel better? Are you happy with yourself? But let’s get serious for a minute: if you could show compassion without the fear of “getting caught” in the act, where would you like to go and what would you like to do?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Nineteen**

#### ***“Is It Really Going To Be Worth It? – Understanding What My College Has To Offer”***

1. The chapter opens with a brief description of Phil and his decision about college. Take a few minutes and write a letter to Phil, expressing your opinions about his concerns. Then, if you want to have some fun, write a letter to Phil as if you represent your school’s recruitment office.
2. Some education critics have suggested that college courses would be better served and received if high school graduates waited two years before they attend college. (Think about all the sleep you could catch up on.) Those who have taught “adult learners” who are returning to the classroom after a few years in the workplace claim that class time is far more valuable to adult students than “traditional” students. Ask your university’s adult program if you might interview one of the students who has come back to school. Ask the adult student one question: “Why did you come back?” And then step aside and listen.
3. Tyler Blake, the writer of this chapter, claims that there are five great motivators for seeking and obtaining a college degree. Put them in the order of importance to you. If you were asked to add a sixth (and seventh) motivator, what would it be?
4. If you were to quit school right now, where do you suppose you would be in five years? Ten years? Twenty-five years?
5. Let’s have a little fun. If college is, in part, a place to find a spouse, why don’t you spend some time describing him/her right here? (Guys, after you describe her body, get to more important stuff.)

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### Chapter Twenty

#### *“Roommates And The Theory Of Relativity – Living With A Roommate”*

1. Make a “word portrait” of your roommate. If you split the paper down the middle (vertically), you could put “Things I like” at the top of one list and “Things I Hate (or at least Don’t Like)” above the other. Now place some words or phrases that characterize your roommate. This is a time to be honest but not necessarily cruel. Which characteristic do you enjoy the most? Which one is stretching your “roommateship” to the limit?
2. In our roommateships, friendships and even the marriage relationship, we human beings love to bend their will to ours. Why do you suppose people are like that? Why is our way almost always the better way? Why do we just hate compromising or, worse, giving in? Why is it so hard to let someone else’s standard or method or tradition overrule our own? Go ahead – name names. Take no prisoners.
3. The theory of “relativity” certainly has merit, doesn’t it? What is one issue where you pronounce it “ta-may-toe” and she/he pronounces it “toe-mah-toe”? Is the alarm in the morning? The temperature setting on the thermostat? The nightlight in the corner of the room that looks an awful lot like a 13” color TV? How can you and your roommate reconcile that difference of opinion most painlessly? Where might the “humor in your differences” be hiding presently?
4. Do you believe “it takes humility to be a roommate”? How is that manifested in the everyday existence you and your roommate share? How might you show more of it? If you were to make a brief list, what else does it take “to be a roommate”?
5. What are the advantages to living in a “community”? What are the drawbacks?

# Dorm Room Devotions

Discussion and Response Questions

## Chapter Twenty-One

### *“The Redemptive Rhythm Of Life – How To Best Manage Your Time”*

1. You have met and will meet people in your life who might be labeled “human doings” rather than “human beings.” They join everything, go everywhere, know everybody and never seem to run out of energy. Then there are “human nothings.” These are polar opposites of “human doings.” They don’t join anything, go anywhere, know anybody and ever have any energy. The trick is to live somewhere in between, to find balance in life. In your day, what are the four most important attachments you feel, the four entities that call your name most frequently and loudly? Because you’re a student, we know academics (schoolwork) is the fifth one. What are the other four?
2. Taking a look at the five items on your list from question 1, which one is the most important? Which is second, third, fourth and fifth? How have you learned to put #1 ahead of all the others, which is really asking, how have you learned to say “no” when valid and worthwhile distractions come up? How do you know when things are getting out of balance?
3. Most students suffer from “acute procrastinationitis.” It seems so easy on Monday to tell yourself, “Hey, I have four whole days to get that little paper finished,” and the next thing you know, you’re turning off “E.R.” and rushing to the school library before it closes on Thursday night. Face it: when you say “I didn’t have time to...,” what you’re really saying is “I didn’t *make* time to...” In other words, others things were more important to you. How do you decide what is important and worthy of your time?
4. Now that we can actually do “more” in a day, we often find ourselves accomplishing less. Why is that? As food gets faster served, we gain more weight. As we get bigger, super models get thinner and eating disorders skyrocket. As we communicate more quickly, we run out of meaningful things to talk about. As we get more connected to cell phones, we lose the sense of community. Blevins asks a good question: “Do we manage time, or does time manage us?”
5. If you could design for yourself the “perfect day,” how would you spend those 24 hours? (And we’ll just suggest that eight hours of sleep is sufficient.)

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Twenty-Two**

#### ***“It’s Not A Matter Of ‘If’ – It’s A Matter Of ‘When’ – Learning How To Study”***

1. Rituals may be at the heart of learning how to study because we know that when we are in “that place” at “that time” with “that turned on” and “that turned off,” we are ready to study. It’s like those baseball hitters who go through all those gesticulations before they step into the batter’s box: if they complete their ritual, they believe they will get a hit. What are your study rituals. What do you have to have in order to concentrate at a high degree? What has to be gone or absent in order for you to fully focus? Do you have to have a certain snack, a particularly kind of music, absolute quiet, be lying down or sitting at a table?
2. Dorms are not made for studying. Maybe you’ve discovered that already. Anybody who thinks he or she will find a quiet place or “down” time to get some good reading and writing in has another think coming. It ain’t gonna happen. What plans have you made or what strategies have you tried to find a good place and time to study? What has NOT worked for you?
3. Make your needs known. Why don’t you take a few minutes right now to write a letter to the student development or resident director office of your campus to express your desire to study? Ask them if they could find you a place conducive to focused study. Suggest that study hours be instituted and enforced so dorm residents could actually fulfill the primary purpose in coming to school. Then be prepared to become part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Commit to keeping your own personal noise level down by using earphones and holding loud pranks down to a minimum.
4. Of the five steps suggested in this chapter to become more disciplined and productive, which is the most imperative? Which is the hardest for you to fulfill? How can you make sure you do as many of these steps as you can? What are the hurdles you’ll have to jump in order to accomplish a disciplined, purposeful college career?
5. If you were trying to explain some of the major differences between high school and college to a friend who is still in high school, what would you include? What have you found to be some of the major differences between a teacher and a professor? What adjustments have you had to make in order to keep your academic head above the grade point water?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Twenty-Three**

#### ***“Tools Of The Gifted – Practicing Good Stewardship”***

1. When you borrow someone’s car, you are usually very careful to make sure it’s in exactly the same shape (or even better) as when you got it, right? You might even fill the gas tank as a way of saying thanks. That’s the way we ought to treat our bodies, “temples of the Holy Spirit” that we just borrow (read I Corinthians 6:19-20 again). We should honor God by honoring our bodies, taking care of them, feeding them and exercising them with moderation. How do you prevent your “temple” from falling into ill repair? What do you avoid? What do you enjoy? What are ways our culture tells us to abuse our bodies?
2. Like our bodies, our money and material possessions are lent to us for a time. If you could keep only five possessions, maybe even had to carry them around in your backpack everywhere you went, what five things would you find most valuable? What could you live without?
3. Think of all the commercials you can that promote excess consumerism: buying things you don’t need. As you know, commercials are on the air simply to create a perceived need, but you’re much smarter than they are. You know you don’t need most of the “stuff” being advertised. What/Who are some of the biggest abusers (products, companies, advertisers) on television, radio or in magazines with this “perceived need” deception?
4. We’ve discussed this idea already, but it’s good to bring it up again: we all have special and unique spiritual gifts that we are called to use in “the body of believers.” Make a list of ten people you know really well (parents, siblings, friends, relatives) and follow each name with his/her special, unique spiritual gift.
5. This chapter is all about “tools.” What is meant by that term in this chapter? What are the tools you carry with you? How can you use them to help build the Kingdom of God?

# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Twenty-Four**

#### ***“To Work Or Not To Work – Learning To Balance School And Work”***

1. You know the “Catch-22” students on campus, don’t you? They’re the ones who are so bleary-eyed from studying all night because they had to work all day in order to pay for school in the first place and bring home all that homework that they can barely function in class. Hey, you might be one of them. How does a person who *has to work* long hours, perhaps even full-time, for bills or family or whatever find a balance with all the requirements of a full load of classes?
2. If the #1 reason you’re in school today is to get a good education and learn everything you’ll need to succeed in both a career and compassionate ministry, then earning money can be no higher than #2, right? That means that as soon as work prevents you from getting a good education and learning everything you’ll need to succeed, you have to cut back your work hours or quit altogether. What is the money you’re earning being spent on? Is there any way you could have a pretty decent life without as much money as you currently earn? Are you willing to take five years to finish college (fewer hours each semester) in order to work more to earn more?
3. Here’s another one of those two-column lists: on one side, write down your material needs; on the other side, write down your material wants. After completing the list, are there any “needs” that really, honestly belong over on the “want” side of the ledger? Are there any “wants” that are more important than getting an education and everything you’ll need?
4. Nobody can do everything! Everybody has to follow his desires and say “no” to most things so he can do really, really, really well at the things he says “yes” to. Eventually, most of us become “specialists” out of necessity, out of the need to survive. If you don’t “have” enough time in the day to get everything finished, then you need to cut down your list of things to do because not even you can add more hours to your day. (And who would want to, really?) Take a look at your life: what’s got to go?
5. Avoid the “Debt Monster.” America’s economy is based on credit. If you don’t believe that, look at the national debt and deficit figures sometime. It’ll make you feel better about your own plight, that’s for certain. Consumerism and capitalism tell you to “buy now, pay later,” but that comes with a huge price, called “interest.” Interest on debt is what causes most domestic bankruptcies. How are you going to conquer the “Debt Monster”? And what are you going to do if you fall in love with someone who worships the Debt Monster?



# Dorm Room Devotions

## Discussion and Response Questions

### **Chapter Twenty-Five**

#### ***“What’s Your IQ – Developing A Lifestyle Of Integrity”***

1. How do you personally define “integrity”? What are some of its synonyms? How about its antonyms? Give an example of someone showing personal integrity, either from experience, knowledge of others or one you create from your imagination.
2. Here are some situations that call a person’s integrity into question. How would you handle them?
  - The server at a restaurant you’ll never go back to gives you \$8.47 too much change.
  - You find a wallet with \$110 in it but the only ID is a place of business, not an individual’s name.
  - You’re going to have to pay more income tax this year unless you fudge just a little on one deduction, and the likelihood of getting caught is almost nil.
  - Your roommate needs an A on the same assignment you got an A on last semester, but she/he doesn’t have time to do the assignment himself.
  - You’re madly in love and he/she is “ready to show his/her commitment” to you physically.
3. We’ve all met individuals (unfortunately) who just don’t “walk the talk.” They say one thing but do or think the opposite. It’s called hypocrisy and nobody likes it, but most of us have fallen into its trap...at least once. If you can, tell about a time you felt hypocritical. If you can’t think of a time or are just too uncomfortable sharing that, then write about a time you saw hypocrisy at its worst.
4. Jan Lanham, the writer of this chapter, says, “A life of integrity takes relationships seriously.” What do you think she means by that? How is integrity practiced in personal relationships? What happens to relationships in which one or both people demonstrate a gap in their integrity?
5. Lanham also paraphrases Scripture when she says that “A life of integrity acknowledges the need to confront the issue of priorities,” then cites the Pharisees who paid their tithe (one-tenth of their incomes) but neglected “justice, mercy and faithfulness.” One Christian said that committing one-tenth of one’s income is the easy part; it’s committing one-tenth of one’s time that’s hard. That’s the truth. Think about it: what if you committed to serving others and building God’s Kingdom two hours and 24 minutes every day? Well, let’s take it a step further: what would you do tomorrow in those two hours and 24 minutes? How about the next day?