

THE HEART OF MAN

Discussion Guide



SCENE 1: THE TABLE

Can you identify with the image of a good, trustworthy Father, standing at the head of the table, affirming, enjoying and loving you?

Is this how you think of God the Father?
Why, or why not?

Is this consistent with your experience with your earthly father?
In what ways?

Do you long to belong?
In what ways?
To whom/ to what?

What 'table' or 'community' in your own life do you experience as a place where you feel comfortable in our skin? Where don't you have to hide or keep secrets?

How does the picture of the early church (Acts 2:42-47) make you feel?
Is that the kind of close-knit community you long to be a part of?
Or does that kind of interconnected, interdependent community cause you some anxiety and fear? Why or why not?

Why do you think the early church, living out community in that way, grew so much (the Lord added to their number day by day)?

How can you be more present at God's 'table' this week?

In what relationships can you live out a better image the good, trustworthy Father, affirming, enjoying and loving others, no matter what season of life they are in?



SCENE 2: THE BOAT

Have you ever called God 'Abba' or 'Papa'? Try it right now.
How does it make you feel to use that more personal name for God?
Does it change how you think about the Father? How?

Would you characterize your earthly father as a wounded father? Why or why not?
Did your father ever talk about his wounds?
How do you think his wounds affected how he fathered you?

Are you a wounded father?
How do your wounds affect how you father your child/ren?

In the film THE HEART OF MAN, author William Paul Young says, 'It took me fifty years to wipe the face of my father completely off the face of God.' What does he mean by that?
Can you relate at all to this sentiment about your view of God the Father?

Reflecting on Romans 8:14-17 and 1 John 3:1, not only are we called God's 'children,' but also his 'adopted' children and even 'heirs.' What more does your identity as 'adopted' and 'heirs' say about how God feels about you?

Reflecting on Matthew 7:9-11, what 'good gifts' has God given you?



SCENE 3: THE CLIFF

Do you believe that God gave you the freedom to love and the freedom to say ‘no’ to the temptations in your life?

Do you sometimes wish you had less freedom?

Do you agree with the above description of how sin works? Is that how you’ve experienced sin in your own life?

What temptation(s) are you currently facing in your own life? What cliff are you standing on?

What has brought you to the cliff?

Do you believe God has given you a choice to walk away from that cliff?

Do you feel God’s presence WITH you on the edge of that cliff?

Who can you talk to about the cliff you are standing on and trust to join you and guide you through your struggle? Contact them TODAY... don’t wait. And ask God to make His presence known to you as you stand on that cliff.



SCENE 4: THE LAGOON

Have you already had your own 'lagoon experience' in life?

What is it?

Have you shared this with someone you trust?

Do you feel like you're on the verge of a 'lagoon experience'?

There's still time to stop and turn around.

God is already there with you in the lagoon and available to give you the strength you need.

As Romans 7:18 says, 'For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.'

It is only through Christ's strength in you that you can do what is right.

Are you relying on His strength to you?

God has already forgiven you for your choices in the lagoon.

Have you forgiven yourself? If not, why not?

1 John 1:8-9 says 'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'

Are you in denial of your sin?

What sin have you denied that you need to confess? To yourself? To your spouse? To a friend?

Now claim and celebrate the forgiveness God gives you through His Son!



SCENE 5: THE CAVE

Are you currently in a cave in your life?
What choices did you make to get you there?

You may believe in your mind that God loves you. Do you also believe that God is with you in the cave?
...in your shame and your darkest moments?
Why do you think he's with you there?

Or do you believe He's waiting for you to clean yourself off before He can hold and comfort you?

If you accept this truth, how could this change how you view yourself day to day?
How could this change how you view others?

What's keeping you from accepting that your shame story was eradicated at the cross?

Romans 8:37-39 says, '...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life...nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

That is to say, 'nothing' can separate you from God's love. That includes your self-destructive choices.
Are you living in God's love? If not, what can you today to take a step in that direction?

Isaiah 43:1-2 says it another way, God says 'I will be with you... when you go through deep water when you go through rivers of difficulty when you walk through the fire of oppression.'

Pray today that you recognize and feel God's presence with you in your cave, in your deep waters, in your river of difficulty, in your fire of oppression.'



SCENE 6: THE FEAST

Have you arrived yet at this feast?
Or have you been at the feast before but feel like you left for a season?

Do you believe there is a seat always reserved for you at the table?
Have you taken your seat yet?
Why or why not?

Do you believe that He is a good Father and that you are a good son?
Why or why not?

Paul Young says, 'Who you are matters, and who you are becoming matters. And the truth of who you are matters. You're the one that He left the ninety-nine to find. You matter.' Do you live in this reality? How so?

You are a new creature. What does mean to you?

What could it mean for you to live free?

Where are you on your prodigal journey?

Do you feel like you belong at the feast?

You do! Isaiah 25:6 says, 'On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.'

Thank the Father for His invitation to the feast, and know that you always have a seat at the table!