

Discussion Questions for 2022-2023 P&A Goal Books

Peninsula Community Chapel – Updated January 9, 2023

Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth by Thaddeus J. Williams

Discussion questions are provided in the book.

The Secular Creed by Rebecca McLaughlin

Introduction

1. Which of the following five secular claims do you find to be the most difficult to engage in a conversation about?
Why?
 - a. Black Lives Matter
 - b. Love is Love
 - c. The Gay Rights Movement is the new Civil Rights Movement
 - d. Women’s Rights are Human Rights
 - e. Transgender Women are Women
2. How should we distinguish between ideas that we as Christians can and should affirm and ideas that must not affirm or embrace?

Chapter 1

1. What is the anger, fear and pain that is revealed in the statement that “black lives matter?”
2. What did this chapter reveal about how the Bible reveals a “multi-ethnic heartbeat” from Genesis to Revelation?
3. How did the church in Acts, living in light of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, display diversity in leadership and in practice? What accounts for this unity?
4. In what ways have white Christians in American been complicit in racism?
5. How do we disentangle the difference between Black Lives Matter as an organization that stands for some things we cannot embrace and the biblical truth that black lives do indeed matter to Jesus?

Chapter 2

1. How does the statement, “love is love” reinforce the view that anyone’s definition of love is valid?
2. The author states that the question should not be “what is love?” but rather “who is love?” In what ways is that a better question?
3. How is everyone’s good and right search for belonging realized in Jesus Christ?
4. In what ways is same-sex erotic love not just a distortion of God’s plan for marriage but also a distortion of God’s plan for healthy same-sex friendship?
5. What is one thing you can do to help the church become a place where all people (single or married, same sex attracted or straight, old or young, widowed or newlywed) can be welcomed and loved?

Chapter 3

1. McLaughlin points out that some claim that Christians will be on the “wrong side of history” if they do not support the gay-rights movement as the new civil-rights movement. She points out six problems with this claim. Which did you find the most compelling and why?
2. In regard to Christians who supported segregation, McLaughlin argues that those Christians did so not because they listened to the Bible too much, but too little. In regard to the opposing views regarding the contemporary gay-rights movement, which side seems to be listening to the Bible too little? Or even editing it to fit their desires?
3. According to McLaughlin’s research, how do black Americans tend to feel about the gay-rights movement?
4. How does McLaughlin say that race is different from sexual orientation/identity?
5. On page 55 McLaughlin states: “Many who were raised in the church were taught to be suspicious of gay and lesbian people. In fact, the idea that gay and lesbian people were in some general sense *bad people* was baked into the teaching.” What does she say is problematic about this?

6. How did the story of Genia and Misha impact you? How should we think about and help people in situations like theirs?

Chapter 4

1. How does the Bible, the Church and Jesus himself value and honor women?
2. How did Jesus elevate women's "rights" in relation to the culture of his day?
3. McLaughlin says that "If Christianity is true, and if people are indeed made in the image of the living God, then both mother and baby matter." How does this statement affirm or deny women's rights?
4. Based on the definition of feminism that McLaughlin puts forth in this chapter, can Christianity and feminism co-exist? What in this section of the chapter stood out to you?
5. What has been the fallout of the sexual revolution?
6. Consider the quote on page 78: "...God calls us to a world in which women are seen as equal to men, regardless of their marital status, in which pregnant women are supported; in which men are called either to be faithful husbands or faithful singles; and in which babies are valued and provided for - not just by their biological parents, but by their spiritual family writ large. To solve the problem of abortion, we don't need one law reversed. We need a loving revolution." Do you agree? Why or why not?
7. Regarding the previous same quote as above, how have you seen the church faithfully live that out? Where do you think the church still needs to grow? And what can you personally do about it?

Chapter 5

1. How does the argument that "transgender women are women" alter the meaning of the word, "woman?"
2. What is the difference between gender dysphoria and "rapid onset gender dysphoria" particularly amongst girls? What is the underlying cause of the latter?
3. Read Matthew 19:4-11. How does Jesus affirm the sex binary of creation? How does Jesus refer to people who were eunuchs from birth (not equipped with standard-issue sex organs?) What about those who have "made themselves eunuchs?" Where does a Christian find their value?
4. Read Galatians 3:28-29 and Ephesians 5:22-33. Are male and female erased in Christ? Why or why not? What do you think "male and female" and "husband and wife" refer to in these passages?
5. How does Romans 8:22-23 offer hope to those of us who do not feel at home in our bodies?

Conclusion

1. Why is repentance necessary as a follower of Jesus?
2. Read Galatians 6:2 and 1 Peter 4:8. What do these Scriptures reveal about how can we bear one another's burdens and love each other deeply when people have been hurt by racism, hatred, homophobia, and sexism?
3. How can the church affirm, support, and celebrate women the way Jesus did?
4. How can the church affirm the goodness of male and female bodies without clinging to unbiblical gender stereotypes?

Confronting Christianity by Rebecca McLaughlin

Chapter 1

1. What do you think about McLaughlin's assessment that Christianity is still on the rise and that secularism is a failed experiment?
2. What surprised you about McLaughlin's points about the general benefits of Christianity on personal health and society?
3. Do you agree that religion makes the world better? Why or why not?
4. In what ways has religion impacted your life for the better? In what ways could it impact your life for the better?

Chapter 2

1. In what ways do the Scriptures and particularly the Gospels promote diversity?
2. What do you think causes people in our culture to claim that Christianity is a white/western faith?
3. How does Christian doctrine promote diversity?
4. In what ways does diversity in the church help us see our blind spots?
5. What are some ways we can embrace and learn from the global church?
6. What are some ways that you have fallen into the trap of seeing Christianity as solely white and western?

Chapter 3

1. Do you have people that you consistently interact with who think differently than you do?
2. What is the historical reason that multiple religious faiths cannot be true?
3. What would you say to a friend that says that all religions are different paths to the same God and that Christianity might be true for you but not for them?

Chapter 4

1. How does secular humanism fail to offer a moral framework?
2. How does Christianity promote morality?

Chapter 5

1. What, if not religion, is at the heart of all violence?
2. How can the violence of the heart be dealt with according to the Scriptures?

Chapter 6

1. What did you learn about the different forms of writing used in Scripture?
2. How would you respond to objections to a literal interpretation of the Bible?

Chapter 7

1. What surprised and/or encouraged you as you read this chapter?
2. In what ways are science and Christianity compatible?
3. How can we wisely answer people's questions about the compatibility of science and Christianity?

Chapter 8

1. What are some of the ways that Scripture and the Christian worldview honors women?
2. What misconceptions have led to harm regarding the Bible's view of women?
3. How can we communicate God's value of women to a watching world?

Chapter 9

1. How, as Christians, should we respond to the cultural demand to affirm all sexual ethics and lifestyles?
2. How is compassion for those entangled in sin essential to evangelism? How has the church in general failed here? In what ways have you personally failed here?
3. How does the Scripture encourage us to think about homosexuality and those who have embraced it?

Chapter 10

1. What does it communicate about Christians that Paul calls them slaves?
2. How does it impact our view of the church to know that much of the early church were actual slaves and servants?
3. How would you summarize the Bible's view of slavery after reading this chapter?

Chapter 11

1. How is suffering important to the Christian experience?
2. How can suffering help us see Jesus more clearly? In what ways have you experienced that?
3. How can suffering point non-believers to Jesus?

Chapter 12

1. What are some of the gaping holes in the secular view of morality?
2. What incorrect assumptions about God and mankind are revealed by those holes?
3. What is the wrath of God and why is it central to the Christian worldview?
4. Why are God's love and wrath bound together?
5. What, in this chapter, did you learn about the person and work of Christ?
6. After reading this chapter, how would you respond to someone who says that a loving God cannot send people to hell?
7. How does the reality of the wrath of God motivate you toward a closer relationship with Him and a deeper commitment to sharing him with others?

The New Reformation by Shai Linne

Discussion questions are not currently available.

Gay Girl, Good God by Jackie Hill Perry

Due to the biographical nature of this book, it is suggested that you use this one set of questions to guide discussion for as often as you meet to talk about the book.

1. What have you learned from Jackie's story so far that is causing you to think differently about those who struggle with same-sex attraction or those who have embraced a gay identity?
2. How has her story stirred compassion in you?
3. How is this book impacting your understanding of what the Bible teaches about sex and marriage?
4. How has this section equipped you to talk to people more confidently about the biblical sexual ethic (what the Bible says we should/shouldn't do regarding sexuality)?
5. How has this section equipped you to pray for those who do not yet know Christ and have embraced a gay identity?
6. How has this section equipped you to pray for brothers and sisters in Christ who experience same-sex attraction?

Surviving Religion 101 by Michael Kruger

Chapter 1

1. On page 28, Kruger talks about the anxiety many feel when moving on to the next stage of life. What fears do/did you have when you left for college or moved into a different stage of life?
2. Have you had personal experience with people questioning your beliefs? How did you handle it? (Pages 31-32)
3. What have you learned through an experience in which you faced opposition? (Page 35)
4. Out of the sections; "Of Course You Don't Have All the Answers", "What Doesn't Kill You Only Makes You Stronger", and "Band of Brothers (or Sisters!)" which encouraged you the most and why? (Pages 30-38)

Chapter 2

1. Why is it important to understand that everyone has preconceived notions or things that they presuppose to be true? (Pages 39-44)
2. What explains why so many people have a paradigm that is hostile to Christianity? (Page 45)
3. Have you ever felt alone in your faith? Explain.
4. What encouragement did you find in the section "You're Not Alone"? (Pages 47-49)

Chapter 3

1. On pages 53-62, Kruger presents five arguments commonly used to assert that there can't possibly be one true religion. Which if any of these arguments have you encountered?
2. Explain the different flaws that Kruger points out with each of the five arguments mentioned in the previous question.
3. What reasons does Kruger give for why Christianity is the one true religion?

Chapter 4

1. What are the three major flaws with moral relativism? (Pages 68-70)
2. What things must be true to have a moral absolute? (Pages 71-72)
3. Why can only God provide the necessary foundation for morality? (Pages 71-74)
4. How should knowing that everyone has moral absolutes and that moral absolutes are rooted in God affect your conversations about morality with your non-Christian friends? (Page 74)

Chapter 5

1. What does Kruger say about whether it is possible to love and accept people without approving of their behavior?
2. What is the major flaw in the argument that people should be free to love whomever they want? (Pages 80-81)
3. What is a biblical response to the claim that homosexuality is genetically determined? (Pages 81-83)
4. What should our reaction be to the harsh way homosexuals have historically been treated by the church? (Page 87)

Chapter 6

1. What objections do people have against the doctrine of hell? (Page 92)
2. Why is the doctrine of hell not unjust? (Page 97)
3. How do you answer “the man on the deserted island” objection found on pages 102-103?

Chapter 7

1. Have you ever experienced God’s goodness in the midst of pain? Explain.
2. What would you say to someone who would say that “if God were good, he wouldn’t permit evil”? (Page 110)
3. On page 112, what are the three possibilities that Kruger gives for good reasons why God would allow evil?
4. Who really has the problem explaining evil and why? (Pages 116-117)

Chapter 8

1. In what ways have you been taught or heard that religion and science are not compatible?
2. How does science actually need Christianity? (Pages 123-124)
3. What are the three problems that Kruger identifies with Richard Dawkins’ quote “It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane.”? (Pages 125-127)
4. How can the Bible properly play a role in the study of science? (Pages 128-130)

Chapter 9

1. What are some reasons people give for believing that miracles are either impossible or improbable? (Pages 135-139)
2. What are the flaws in thinking that miracles are either impossible or improbable? (Pages 135-139)
3. What are the three main reasons for believing in the resurrection of Christ? (Pages 140-142)

Chapter 10

1. What characteristics distinguish the Christian God from the gods of other major religions? (Pages 149-150)
2. What reasons does Kruger give for God’s use of the *written word* in speaking to humans? (Pages 151-153)
3. What are the three divine qualities present in Scripture that help identify God as the author? Name and explain them. (Pages 153-154)
4. What are the two ways we can determine if a book is from God? (Pages 157-158)

Chapter 11

1. Explain how the date of the Gospels helps to reveal their accuracy. (Pages 162-164)
2. What are the two lines of evidence that support the traditional authors assigned to each of the four Gospels? (Pages 166-168)
3. What evidence exists for the reliability of the Gospels? (Pages 168-170)
4. How would you summarize the three reasons for why there aren’t contradictions in the Gospels when there might appear to be some. (170-172)
5. How would you explain to a skeptic friend that the Gospels can be trusted?

Chapter 12

1. Explain how the quantity of manuscripts can help aid in the accuracy of New Testament books. (Pages 176-178)
2. How would you summarize the three reasons for why textual variants don’t necessarily equate to inaccuracy of New Testament books. (179-181)
3. Why don’t the two large textual variations (Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11) present as large a problem as some critics would argue? (Pages 182-183)
4. Why doesn’t the fact that some early manuscripts don’t include the words in Luke 22:44 present a large problem? (Pages 183-184)
5. How would you handle teaching passages of scripture like Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11 if you were leading a Bible study?

Chapter 13

1. Explain how the origins of the canon help to not put into question which New Testament books should be considered as canonical. (Pages 190-193)
2. What evidence exists that helps put Apocryphal books outside of the canon of Scripture? (Pages 193-194)

3. What allowed early Christians to recognize which books belonged and which did not in the New Testament canon? (Pages 195-197)
4. What are the requirements for an Old Testament book to be included in the canon of Scripture? (Pages 198-199)
5. How would you explain to a Catholic friend how to best think of the Apocryphal books?

Chapter 14

1. Explain how the “moral argument” has changed since the 1980s. (Pages 202-203)
2. What evidence exists in scripture that helps prove that the Bible isn’t pro-slavery? (Pages 203-205)
3. What are examples of how the Bible is pro-woman? (Pages 206-210)
4. How would you summarize the three reasons for why God is not guilty of genocide. (Pages 211-213)
5. Explain why the people who have a real problem with slavery, the mistreatment of women, and genocide are not actually Christians but the non-Christians. (Pages 214-215)
6. Out of the three “moral arguments” presented in this chapter, which have you struggled with?

Chapter 15

1. Explain why doubts don’t necessarily make you a “bad Christian.” (Page 219)
2. What does Kruger say should be done in the face of doubt? (Pages 220-222)
3. What are a few of the reasons some people face doubt in their faith? (Pages 223-225)
4. Which of the reasons for doubt have you faced?
5. What are ways that you can pro-actively push back against doubts? (Pages 225-229)

<i>Making Sense of God</i> by Tim Keller

Chapter 1

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. Why do you think religion in general is so important to people?
3. Keller argues that “people believe in God not merely because they feel some emotional need, but because it makes sense of what they see and experience.” Do you agree that we need some narrative to make sense of the human experience and the big questions in life? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever had a spiritual or supernatural experience you couldn’t explain? Did it influence your beliefs at all?

Chapter 2

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. What do you think of Keller’s provocative thesis that one can’t truly have a solely scientific, rational, and secular worldview because there’s a fair amount of “faith” that’s required? Do you think the “burden of proof” falls more on one side or another?
3. Keller encourages us to go through the process of “doubting your doubts.” Consider one doubt that you wrestle with. What are some deeper underlying assumptions that might be underneath it?

Chapter 3

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. How do you answer the question, “What is the meaning of life?” Is it composed of objective meaning or created? Or some of both?
3. When tragedy strikes in your life, how do you cope? Do you scramble to find some framework to make sense of it all in the moment? Do you temporarily adopt a religious framework just to get through and then discard it when it’s not useful anymore? Or do you have a worldview that is objective, immovable, and not subject to the ever-changing circumstances of life?

Chapter 4

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. What are things you’re waiting for that you think will finally make you happy?
3. Why do you think we are more inclined to think that we can do a better job of ordering our lives than an infinitely wise, just, faithful, and loving God?

Chapter 5

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. What are some ways that you've given up certain freedoms to gain something better than what you lost?
3. Take a minute and reflect on this re-framing of Christianity. If you are not a Christian, does anything in this chapter make you see Christianity and the rules aspect of it any differently? If you are a Christian, ask yourself why do you obey God? Is it to try and gain points with Him? To try and pay Him back for all He's done for you? To feel superior to others? To look at your life and be proud of how well you're living inside the rules? Or is learning about and obeying God a delight and joy because you love Him, for all He's done and for all He is? Share your thoughts.

Chapter 6

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. How do you define your own identity in the dimensions Keller described – a sense of self (constant in every setting) and a sense of worth?
3. How did you arrive at that identity? Does that process fall into either of the categories Keller described, or some of both (community-determined or self-determined)?

Chapter 7

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. Whose approval would you say you currently live for? How durable is their approval?
3. Did any of the reasons Keller listed for why Christian identity is more durable and stable surprise you or strike you in particular? Why?

Chapter 8

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. What are some examples of how something that lies in the future orients how you live in the present?
3. It's not easy, but consider your own mortality for a moment. What narrative do you have to cope with such a dark reality? Does that narrative give you a firm peace or leave you with uncertainty and fear?

Chapter 9

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. Where do you believe morality comes from? Do you believe a universal standard of morality exists?
3. What do you think of Keller's assertion that moral obligation points us to a relationship? Is it strange to think that morality may be more than behavioral dos and don'ts and is instead tied to much grander issues of human purpose and relationship with their Creator?

Chapter 10

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. Have you personally seen the hypocrisy of a religious person who oppresses others with their moral beliefs?
3. On the flip side, have you personally seen a religious person take a firm and principled stand, but humbly and with grace? How did those two experiences differ?

Chapter 11

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. Of the six reasons Keller covered, which are the most personally compelling to you?
3. What are some arguments against the existence of God that you believe now or that you've believed in the past?

Chapter 12

1. What quotes or sections of this chapter were especially thought provoking to you?
2. Have you ever taken the time to read the four Gospel accounts in the Bible? Why or why not?
3. If you've read the Gospels, what are the most compelling and striking aspects of who Jesus was or what he said? What are the most difficult?

Introduction

1. What jumped out to you from the introduction and why?
2. Look over the table of contents. Which of these chapters seems the most interesting to you and why? Which do you think will be the most helpful for our church?

Chapter 1

1. Are you more inclined to struggle with the veracity of Christianity or the goodness of Christianity? Why?
2. Describe a time when you have doubted or especially struggled with doubt. What led you to that struggle? What did you do in response?
3. What do you think of Wax' instruction to the doubter to apply their questions and scrutiny to their newfound faith and faith community? What impact do you think it would have if someone were to do that?
4. What encouragement does Wax share with those who struggle with doubts?

Chapter 2

1. How does the author define Progressive Christianity?
2. Where have you seen Progressive Christianity around you?
3. Describe a time when you had questions about your faith but you decided to "Keep going" (to go further with your questions) and not settle for simplistic answers and quit the faith.
4. Where do you hear "God is a vague mystery, not something we can truly know"? How does the author suggest you respond to such claims?

Chapter 3

1. In what ways have you seen more of an American cultural faith or Progressive Christianity infiltrate Christian community?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that people with privilege are often the ones to choose "bespoke spirituality"? Why?
3. Looking at the list on pages 30-31, what is one Western cultural norm that you have had to fight against in your personal walk with Christ?
4. Do you have someone that you are specifically praying for as you read this book? Take a moment to pray for them together.

Chapter 4

1. As you've grown in your knowledge of the Gospel, are there things that are true of the Gospel that don't align with what was taught in the church you grew up in?
2. What is the difference between "disenculturation" and "deconstruction" according to the author? (Pages 34-37)
3. What two things are common for people who don't have a "keep" bucket and an "ignore" bucket? (Pages 35-36)
4. Out of the four ideas shared on how to "disenculturate," which one do you see most needed in your Christian community? (Pages 38-41)

Chapter 5

1. What is the "Us vs. Them" mentality that Rachel Gilson describes? What are ways you have combatted this thinking towards others in your own life and ministry?
2. What are ways we can talk about the beauty of marriage without giving the implicit message that marriage is the ultimate reward?
3. In what ways have you heard Christians promote the idea that sexual desire is a problem or wrong? How should we move towards a more accurate and Biblical understanding of sexual desire?
4. On page 47, the author writes "...instead of being the safest possible place to understand sexuality, churches have often felt like minefields. One wrong step, one slight giveaway, and it's over." Has this been your experience at church? If so, how? In what ways can our church community grow in this?

Chapter 6

1. On page 54, the author lists three general reasons that tend to lead people to think that Christianity is racist. Which one of these (or others) have you most often encountered from unbelievers? How have you engaged with them over their questions?
2. How can we help disentangle the false teaching of racists within the American church from the true message of equality that the Bible brings?
3. Have you ever had to fight (in your own heart) against a "denial of racism," a "knee-jerk proclamation that all lives matter," or a general disregard for the plight of minorities? How has the current cultural moment affected that?
4. How can you honor other brothers and sisters in the faith who have personal stories of being mistreated due to the color of their skin?

Chapter 7

1. Read the quote on starting on the bottom of page 62 starting with, "This is what it looks like..." and ending on pg 63 with "...Sovereign ruler of history." How have you seen this in your own life or in the lives of others?
2. Are there any things that you have wrongly held up as tests for Christian fellowship? If so, what were they and how did it impact you and your fellowship with others?
3. On page 65 the author says, "When it's winning that matters and not wisdom, people outsource their convictions to keep their tribe." In what ways have you seen this in your own life or the lives of others?
4. On page 66, the author describes what they believe is the only way out of the fragility that so negatively impacts political discourse. What is his proposed solution, and do you agree with it? Why or why not?

Chapter 8

1. How would you summarize the distinctions that Kim makes between wit and wisdom as they relate to the internet? Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Kim says that the internet has trained our brains to prefer processing written content in short bursts. How do you think this impacts us as a society? How does it impact us as Christians?
3. How do you think the ability to draw your own boundaries and shape your personal experience and connections on the internet has changed the way you think about engaging with other people in real life? How does it impact how you think about engaging with others in the church?
4. What are some ways you can use the internet for good? How can you counteract how the enemy wants to use it for evil?

Chapter 9

1. On page 78, Williams says that Social Justice A is "deeply compatible with a Christian worldview" while Social Justice B is not. Describe what Social Justice B looks like.
2. When defending Christian charity and justice, the world often pushes back with a "caricature of Christianity in many Social Justice B circles" as well as a list of "fails" done by self-proclaimed Christians through the ages. Have you run into either or both of these arguments? How have you responded to them or wrestled in your own soul with them?
3. We all have our justice issues that we feel strongly about and which we believe we can defend biblically. Where, however, have **you** fallen into "dogmatism, exclusion and self-righteousness" when you contemplate or defend those issues?
4. Keeping John Perkins' paragraph on the last page of the chapter in mind, how can you grow in living out a pursuit of Social Justice A?

Chapter 10

1. On page 87, Plummer distinguishes between 'science' and 'scientism.' In your own words, what is the difference between the two of these?
2. Where have you seen 'scientism' either personally with someone you have interacted with, or in our culture?
3. The author essentially makes the claim that science is valid and useful in Christianity, but scientism is a false standard. In what ways do we see science as valid and useful within the Christian faith?
4. In what ways is science limited in its capacity for the world and the Christian faith?
5. What, if any, scientific issues or questions do you personally wrestle with in relation to the Christian faith? Does the distinction between 'science' and 'scientism' help you with this/these struggles?

6. The author describes a moral dilemma with scientism. In your own words, how would you best describe this moral dilemma?

Chapter 11

1. On pages 94-95, how does Prior define intellectualism and anti-intellectualism?
2. In what ways have you encountered anti-intellectualism in Christian circles? How about outside of Christian circles?
3. How does anti-intellectualism relate to having a “glass theology”? (Page 96) In what ways is having a more complex and tiered theology helpful?
4. In what ways has increased access to knowledge led to distrust of those with expertise? How might this be affecting culture in general and Christians specifically?
5. How does Jesus demonstrate for us how to handle our difficult questions and the difficult questions of others?

Chapter 12

1. What aspects of the Bible’s teaching about heaven and earth jumped out to you from this chapter and why?
2. Can you think of any unbiblical caricatures of hell you have heard about or once held yourself?
3. How has this chapter led you to think about God and the purpose of hell differently?

Chapter 13

1. What are the types of groups that people seem most likely to find community and a sense of belonging in besides the local church?
2. On page 116 the author says that “we’re hurt in relationship and we find healing in relationship.” If this is true, what does it mean for how we should help those who are hurting?
3. What is the distinction between the church being a great place to *find* community versus a great place to *build* community? What are you doing to help facilitate this? Is there anything more you could do?

Chapter 14

1. Do you personally know someone who seemed to have a vibrant walk with the Lord but now rejects the faith? Tell share about what their walk looked like to you, their deconstruction, and how their deconstruction impacted you.
2. When understanding and responding to disbelief, Wilson offers several cautions. What are some of the things that he cautions against?
3. On p. 125 Wilson speaks of ‘unlikely converts.’ How does his counsel shape your approach to evangelism? Who have you known to be an ‘unlikely convert?’
4. What are some things Wilson says the Bible teaches about why some people just don’t believe?
5. If our expectations and understanding of belief and disbelief are inaccurate and unbiblical, how will that impact how we respond when someone declares that they have left the faith?

Chapter 15

1. How does Rishmawy define a fan-fic Jesus? (Page 132) What elements of a fan-fic Jesus have you heard or held?
2. How does Rishmawy suggest we respond to a fan-fic Jesus being espoused or promoted? (Page 133)
3. How would your non-believing or currently deconstructing friends/family respond to the question: “If I could come up with answers to all of your objections, would you even *want* to believe?”
4. On page 135, Rishmawy cites several hidden motives and external pressures that cause people to balk at God’s Word. What motives or pressures have you had or heard of?
5. What does Rishmawy mean by the testimony effect on page 136? How have you ever experienced it or seen it? What can be done to avoid it?

As a recap/concluding question: Take the book as a whole and apply Rishmawy’s final suggestion: to make Jesus the issue. How would you point to Jesus being the issue (the answer) for any one of topics addressed in the 15 chapters of this book?