

## **BEDROCK: Study Guide Questions**

### **Introduction:**

1. What was your reaction to the example of Dr. Edington? What were your feelings/thoughts as you read it?
2. Describe what you learn about what to expect in life from what was said about Genesis 1-3 on page xi. How does this compare with how people normally look at life?
3. What does this quote mean to you: "This gospel isn't about 'principles by which we learn to live better---it is about a Person!" Are the commands and principles in the Bible meaningless then? How do you see their role?
4. Summarize in one sentence the message of this introduction.

### **Chapter One:**

1. How would you relate the meaning of the story of Elisha and his servant as told here to contemporary examples today?
2. What do you think about the following statement: "How we feel and the attitudes we form are largely tied to how we perceive things." Can you think of examples of where this is true?
3. While acknowledging there is a type of truth to the power of positive thinking, the author finds it not being overly effective. What are your thoughts about the power of positive thinking? What is the point the author is trying to make regarding this way of thinking?
4. How is the example of Paul such a relevant illustration of the power of the gospel to impact life?
5. Why do you think the author has narrowed his key areas to how we handle life to what we believe about God, ourselves, and life? Would you change or add to this list?
6. Speaking personally, how has the gospel directly altered the way you perceive life and the things that happen in life?

### **Chapter Two:**

1. Explain Tim Keller's point in the quote given in this chapter. Why do you think this is Paul's main concern in his prayer for his readers?
2. The author says the three qualities of God ... that He is sovereign, He is good, and that He loves me, are the three most relevant aspects of God's character that provide the basis for responding

to life well. Why do you think he is stressing these three? Why not two? Why not other qualities of God?

3. The author says that the power of the three qualities of God's sovereignty, goodness, and love doesn't lie in a sophisticated understanding of them or in our being aware of them, but rather in our ability to trust in them. Is learning to trust in them a difficult or easy thing to do? Explain. If you believe they can be difficult, why are children or new Christians often able to do this so much better than those who have been in church for many years?
4. Do you find God's response to Job satisfying or not? Explain.
5. Why do we look to other things for life's security and happiness rather than in God's character? Why is God's character such a greater foundation?

### **Chapter Three:**

1. The author states that "... in the end, God being sovereign over all of life is the only real answer there is to our uncertainties, fears, and insecurities" ... Do you agree? If not, why not? If so, why do you believe this is so?
2. How do you think Christians tend to view God's sovereignty? What part, if any, does it play in life for them?
3. Of the four examples provided of God's sovereignty, which one are you drawn to the most? Why? Do any of them cause difficulties or stir up questions for you?
4. Do you think the stories of the Bible help breed the confidence in God and in handling life that the author mentions? Why or why not?
5. Why do we find our purpose in life in light of His purpose?
6. What hinders or prevents us from "joining His story"? What are the results of making life revolve around "our story" even if we use God to do so?
7. If God is the greater power and on our side, why doesn't this result in greater peace and confidence on the part of those who profess faith in Him as their God?

#### **Chapter Four:**

1. How many events/experiences can you think of that have happened in the last 7 days that express the brokenness of life (from personal experience, TV, social media, newspaper, etc. --- limit yourself to only the last 7 days)?
2. After reading this chapter, and in your own words, how would you now respond to the question, "How can a good God sovereignly allow so many bad things to take place?"
3. Discuss --- "If Christ had never been born, what would the world look like?"
4. One day God will make all things right and eliminate all evil and sin. Do you see the "delay" of God in doing this (instead of immediately) as a good thing or not?
5. Some of those within the Christian faith tie living faithfully and having faith to not experiencing difficult things in life (God will bless you and keep you from bad situations if you live faithfully). How would you evaluate that teaching?
6. Why is the Cross such strong proof of God's goodness when so many truly tragic things continue to take place in the world?
7. The author provides two "filters" by which we should look at life. What do you think of the effectiveness of these filters and why?
8. Even in light of all that has been given in this chapter about how to view life's difficulties, Christians going through great pain and hurt need "caring contact" more than "correct doctrine" ... why? What then is the role of the truths offered in this chapter?

#### **Chapter Five:**

1. What is the relationship of "love" to "goodness"? Why is love an important quality of God in addition to His being good?
2. Why do we have such a strong tendency to link God's love for us to how we are living? To the things that happen to us in life?
3. Complete the following: "God's love for me --- and my experience of that love --- has changed my life by \_\_\_\_\_."
4. How did the story of Randy Storms impact you?

5. When life turns difficult or hurtful, what will help you to remember and focus on God's love for you?

### **Chapter Six:**

1. Tim Keller explains that the faith talked about in James 1:6-8 is not a faith of "strength of will" but rather a faith of "type of allegiance." Why is this such an important distinction? What implications does it have for Christian growth? Is this a troublesome concept to you or a freeing concept?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the following: Persons of strong faith are more likely to handle life with greater confidence/security than persons whose faith isn't strong. What does the phrase "strong faith" mean to you?
3. What things, other than one's faith, affect our confidence in handling life?
4. How should we respond to people who have doubts about Christianity? What does Jude 1:22 mean to you?
5. The author talks of two kinds of doubt concerning Christianity. Which type is more prevalent today in your experience?
6. If faith is something rooted in God's character, what does that mean for how a Christian can grow in faith? What is the difference in terms of our Christian experience in understanding faith to be "a decision of allegiance that involves a journey of growth" rather than simply the mantra "just have faith?"
7. What in this chapter was the most meaningful to you personally?

### **Chapter 7:**

1. The author says, "Whenever we substitute other emphases for this relational reality we lose the power of the gospel." Why is this true about the Christian faith?
2. What does the statement "grace always calls us to move forward" mean to you? Does this mean the types of decisions we make and the actions we take are "no big deal"?
3. Explain the concept of "the trilogy" in your own words.

4. What do you think is the result in our lives as Christians when we have a significant emphasis on one aspect of the trilogy but not the other two?
5. The appendix lists verses for all three aspects of God's character that have been emphasized in this book. Take one verse from each category that stands out most to you and share why you selected that particular verse.

### **Chapter Eight:**

1. Can a person be a genuine Christian and not want their life to be shaped and directed by Jesus Christ? Explain.
2. In your own words, what does the phrase "false faith" mean to you?
3. Why do we resist the act of repentance so much when it seems to be so central not only in our coming to Christ but in our growth as Christians? Why is there a strong tendency to resist or dismiss on-going repentance when it is connected to so many positive things in our lives?
4. In your own words, what is the illustration of the sun and solar flares meant to convey? Can you cite some specific examples or experiences that demonstrate this illustration further? How does this help to clarify the purpose of the commands/directions given in Scripture?
5. What does the phrase that C.S. Lewis uses about Aslan, that "He isn't safe," convey about God in relationship to us?
6. What was your reaction to the illustration used of the movie *Fireproof*?
7. Is it wrong to "try and obey" the rules of God? How do we keep from turning obedience into trying to reform ourselves?

### **Chapter Nine:**

1. If you were to try and explain the first miracle of Jesus as recorded in the gospel of John to someone who had never read the Bible before, what would you say? Don't use any religious language.
2. Discuss the statement, "When we lose this relational dynamic as our primary focus in Christianity, we turn our faith into a religion, and religion cannot change the human heart." Explain what "relational dynamic" means. In what ways do you find this statement to be true?

What does it mean for faith to be turned into a religion? Why can't religion change the human heart?

3. Why does nurturing our relationship with God carry the power to reverse the brokenness of life?
4. What does it mean to "know the Shepherd" in a truly personal way? What prevents us or hinders us from this experience?
5. Reflect back over the book as a whole. What one thing has stood out the most to you? Why?