



BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

With just a word Jesus called Lazarus from the grave, and His Word can help bring us out of our tombs as well. The paperback edition of *Lazarus Awakening* includes a bonus chapter to be inserted following chapter 8 (where you'll find the bonus questions in this guide). To follow the original 10-week format, I suggest studying chapters one and two together. If an eight-week format works better for you, directions for adaptation can be found at my website in the downloadable leader's guide. For those using the hardcover edition, the bonus chapter is available at ww.joannaweaverbooks.com.

Any translation of the Bible you enjoy and understand will work fine for this study (though I have used the NIV to word my questions). You'll also need a pen to record your answers to the questions in this guide. Before each lesson ask the Holy Spirit to increase your understanding as you examine God's Word so that you can apply the truths you discover.

Each lesson starts with questions for individual reflection or group discussion, then moves into a "Going Deeper" study of scriptural principles. At the end of the lesson, you'll have an opportunity to write about or discuss what spoke most to you in that chapter. The stories, quotes, and sidebars within the chapters may provide further opportunities for discussion or reflection.

"I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts," Psalm 119:45 tells us. The same freedom awaits each one of us as we set our hearts on knowing God's Word. Prayerfully commit yourself to this study, giving God access to every tomb that keeps you from living resurrected. For Love is calling your name.

Are you ready to "come forth"?



CHAPTER ONE: TALE OF THE THIRD FOLLOWER

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. This chapter mentions my difficulty with algebra in high school. What was your best subject in school? What was your worst? _____

2. Look at the sidebar titled “What Kind of Father Do You Have?” on page 4. Which (if any) misrepresentation of God as Father have you struggled with? Have you experienced another kind not named? How do you think your connection with your earthly father has affected your relationship with God? _____

Going Deeper

3. Consider the words of David in Psalm 22:1, echoed by Jesus on the cross. Scripture is filled with people who struggled with love-doubt. What kind of circumstances in your life have caused you to question God’s love? What has helped you get God’s love from your head to your heart? _____

4. Read the story of Lazarus found in John 11:1–12:11 (or see Appendix A). Circle or underline key phrases. What stands out to you most in this passage, and why?

5. Put yourself in the sandals of Mary, Martha, or Lazarus. Write a letter to Jesus from that person’s perspective. You can choose any point on the timeline of the story.

6. What do the following verses reveal about the love God has for us?

Psalm 86:15 _____

Romans 8:35-39 _____

1 John 3:1 _____

7. Write out Ephesians 3:17–19 on an index card, beginning with the words “I pray.” Refer to the card frequently over the next few days, memorizing the passage phrase by phrase. Repeat it until it becomes a part of you.

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER TWO: “THE ONE YOU LOVE IS SICK”

Question for Discussion or Reflection

1. Describe briefly how you came to know Jesus as your personal Savior. (If you haven't yet received the gift He offers, why not do it today? Look at “The Invitation” on page 27.) _____

2. If you were to send a message to Jesus concerning your current situation and need, how would you fill in the blank: “Lord, the one you love is _____.”
_____”

Going Deeper

3. Sin is deadly and separates us from God. Match the downward spiral of sin and its effects listed below to the following scriptures by filling in the appropriate letter in the blank before the phrase: (a) Psalm 106:43; (b) Acts 8:23; (c) James 1:14–15.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ___ Fills us with bitterness | ___ Enticed by our own evil desires |
| ___ Makes us waste away | ___ Holds us captive |
| ___ Ends in death | ___ Causes us to rebel against God |

4. Read “What God Does with Our Sins” (pages 24-25). Which one of the points listed by Rosalind Goforth speaks most to your heart? Look up the accompanying scripture and then write it in your own words. _____

5. How does Satan—not to mention your own lower nature—tend to lull you to sleep spiritually, even though you’re a Christian? _____

6. Consider the following verses. According to these scriptures, why is it so important that we wake up, and what should our awakening involve?

Matthew 25:1-13 _____

Romans 13:11-12 _____

Ephesians 5:11-15 _____

7. “God is not mad at you!” That’s the best part of the gospel, someone has said. In fact, instead of holding a grudge, the Lord wants to forgive us and make us His own. Look up the following scriptures and really meditate on them. Under each reference listed below, write down key words or phrases that reveal God’s attitude toward us.

Isaiah 44:21–22

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Colossians 1:21–23a

8. What spoke to you most in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER THREE: OUR FRIEND LAZARUS

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Describe a moment—big or small—when you felt especially loved. What were the circumstances, and what people were involved? Why do you think that experience was so special to you? _____

2. Take the test found in the sidebar titled “What Kind of Friend Am I?” on pages 44-45. What did you discover about your relationship with God? with others? Share one aspect of friendship in which you’d like to grow. _____

Going Deeper

3. How do you respond to the idea that God is an emotional God, feeling deep loneliness and a need for connection? Do you find that possibility comforting or frightening? Read Genesis 2:18–3:13. What do you think God felt when Adam and Eve chose to disobey? If He had penned a journal entry that day long-ago, what might it have said? (Use the back of this sheet for your journal response.) _____

4. Read Hebrews 8:10–12, which describes the new covenant God has made with you and me. If we really understood and responded to His deep desire for fellowship, how would our perspective change toward the following things we do as Christians?

Daily prayer and reading the Bible: _____

Attending church: _____

Living a holy life: _____

5. The statements below describe three famous friends of God in the Bible: Abraham, Moses, and David. Using Numbers 12:7–8, Acts 13:22, and James 2:21–23 as references, match each characteristic below with one of these friends. Do any of these qualities apply to you, even in a small way?

- _____ He was a man after God’s own heart.
- _____ He was faithful in all God’s house.
- _____ His faith and actions worked together.
- _____ He would do everything God wanted him to do.
- _____ He believed God, and it was credited as righteousness.
- _____ God spoke clearly to him and not in riddles.

6. Read John 15:13–17. Write down what you discover in this passage about being a friend of Jesus. _____

7. Read “Help Me Love You More!” on page 38. How would you fill in the blank in the sidebar? Write your own prayer to the Lord, asking Him to increase your ability to love Him better and more. _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER FOUR: WHEN LOVE TARRIES

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Describe a time in your life when waiting was especially difficult. How did you react to the process, and what did you learn? _____

2. Delayed gratification is difficult for all of us. Consider the following aspects, and identify which one (or ones) you struggled with the most while growing up, and which is hardest for you today? If possible, give specific examples.

- Adapting to less-than-perfect situations
- Waiting for the fulfillment of our needs or desires
- Accepting not only delays but also denials of what we want
- Other: _____

Going Deeper

3. One of the hardest things for many people to understand about God is that He doesn't always interrupt or intervene when we're in trouble. Instead, He specializes in redeeming the situation, using it for our good and His kingdom. Look at the following passages and write down the problem God allowed and the benefit that eventually resulted.

Acts 7:59 – 8:3 *Problem:* _____

Acts 11:19-21 *Result:* _____

Acts 21:30-36 *Problem:* _____

Philippians 1:12-14 *Result:* _____

4. We humans tend to love formulas—if we do A and we do B, then God will have to do C. Read Isaiah 55:8–9 and Romans 11:33–36 several times, and allow the heavenly perspective to sink into your heart. Write a response to the Lord concerning the ways you may have tried to control Him through “formulas” rather than simply trusting He knows what is best. _____

5. Read “The Blessing of Trouble” sidebar on pages 58-59. Think of a time when you asked God for something and *didn't* get what you asked for. How has that experience affected your character and your life? Do you think you grew from the experience? Why or why not? _____

6. What do the following verses have to say about the benefits of waiting? Circle the benefit that means the most to you.

Psalm 40:1–3 _____

Isaiah 64:4 _____

Lamentations 3:24–27 _____

7. In what area of your life do you need to hand God the “quill of your will”? Read Romans 8:28 and write it back to the Lord as a prayer, replacing “all things” with specific details of your situation. End the prayer with a declaration of your love and commitment to His will. _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER FIVE: TOMB DWELLING

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. An old New Mexico tombstone reads, “Here lies Johnny Yeast. Pardon me for not rising.”¹ Another one in Colorado protests, “I told you I was sick!” These are silly epitaphs, but on a more serious note, what you would you like your grave marker to say?

2. Consider the “Hurts, Hang-ups, and Habits” sidebar on page 70. Which of these three categories of strongholds tends to trip you up most often in your walk with God? If you feel comfortable sharing, name at least one item you’re struggling with (or have given in to!) right now. Privately or as a group, take those things to the Lord in prayer, claiming the promise of James 5:16.

Going Deeper

3. The Bible speaks powerfully to so many issues. Using a concordance, look up a word or assorted words that relate to your particular struggle—lust, anger, pride, fear, lying, whatever you may be facing. (If needed, ask a friend experienced in Bible study to help.) Pick three pertinent verses to write down, then choose one to memorize. Write it below.

4. We all have lies in our lives that have been internalized as truth. In order to uncover false beliefs, consider the following questions. (Don’t discount anything, even seemingly small stuff that has happened or innocent pastimes you tend to turn to for escape.)

- What failure or trauma from your past still defines you as though it's your *identity*?

- What coping mechanism do you regularly turn to for *security*?

- In the words of self-help guru Dr. Phil, "How's that workin' for ya?"

5 According to the following verses, why is it so important for us to acknowledge our need of forgiveness and healing?

Psalm 66:18-20 _____

Isaiah 30:15-16 _____

1 John 1:9-10 _____

6. The book of Isaiah gives us many glimpses into the purpose of Jesus's coming and ministry. Under the corresponding verses, list the things you discover.

Isaiah 42:1-4

Isaiah 61:1-3

7. One of the most precious aspects of God's work in our lives is His ability to redefine us and change our identities. For the following verses, write down the old name and the new name given and the significance of each. Then consider Revelation 2:17 and its significance to you.

Genesis 32:24-28 Old name: _____

New name: _____

Significance: _____

CHAPTER SIX: ROLL AWAY THE STONE

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Physically speaking, what is the hardest thing you've ever done (climbed a mountain, given birth, etc.)? Describe the experience and what was required to complete the task.

2. Without giving unnecessary details, share a time when bringing a secret to light destroyed the power it had exerted over you? _____

Going Deeper

3. Craig Groeschel says that many of us are *Christian atheists*—"believing in God but living as if He doesn't exist." Can you see signs of this contradiction in your own life or in the lives of Christians in general? Give an example (big or little) if you can. What could we do to better fight the tendency toward Christian atheism? _____

4. Read through Psalm 91 and consider the benefits of making God our shelter and dwelling place rather than choosing to remain in our tombs. List five benefits you appreciate, then pick the one that appeals the most to you and write a short paragraph explaining why. _____

5. God went out of His way to remove the barrier that stood between us and Him. Look up the following passages and describe the process.

Leviticus 16:2 The barrier: _____

Matthew 27:50-51 The process: _____

Hebrews 10:19-22 The result: _____

6. Which one of the following “stones” might be blocking God’s access to the places in you that need healing? Look up the corresponding verses and paraphrase your favorite part back to the Lord as a prayer, asking for help to remove it so that you might be free. Can you think of any *other* stones—besides these three—that might be keeping you from Him?

• *Unworthiness* (Romans 4:7–8; 8:1) _____

• *Unforgiveness* (Ephesians 4:31–5:2) _____

• *Unbelief* (Romans 4:18–22) _____

• *Other:* _____

7. As you hear Jesus asking you to roll away the boulder blockading your heart, what does His response to Martha mean to you: “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:40)? What would it take for you to lay aside unbelief and move forward in your process of healing? _____

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER SEVEN: WHEN LOVE CALLS YOUR NAME

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Did you have a nickname growing up? What did your mom call you when you were in trouble? _____

2. If you were administered a spiritual hearing test today, what do you think the results would be (check one)?

- Improving
- Average
- Poor
- Acute deafness

Is hearing from God a personal struggle for you? What do you normally do to improve your hearing? _____

Going Deeper

3. Read the passage from Priscilla Shirer on page 105. In what ways, past or present, has the enemy tried to convince you that you can't or don't hear God's voice?

4. Elijah heard from God in 1 Kings 19:11–12, but not in the way he expected. What does this passage of Scripture and Isaiah 30:21 reveal about how God tends to speak to us today? What makes the first part of Psalm 46:10 so important to improving our ability to hear Him? _____

5. Luke 6:46–49 highlights the importance of obeying when God speaks and warns what happens when we don't. Record the two different responses to the Lord's words you find in the following verse(s) and the outcome of each.

Matthew 7:24-25	<i>Response:</i>	_____
	<i>Result:</i>	_____
Matthew 7:26-27	<i>Response:</i>	_____
	<i>Result:</i>	_____

6. If possible, describe a time when the Holy Spirit used one of the following methods to speak to you—a repeated theme, an impression, a confirmation, a spirit check, or a verse from the Bible. How did you know it was God speaking? (Remember, often it isn't until after we've obeyed that we realize it was His voice all along.) _____

7. What does the phrase "The teacher is always silent during a test," mean to you (especially in light of the story of Jesus and the three praying women told on page 116-7)?

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER EIGHT: UNWINDING GRAVECLOTHES

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30–35. By nature, if you had been on the road that day, which of the following roles might you have played? (I’ve embellished a bit!)

- *The Priest*—saw the bruised and bleeding man, but kept moving, too busy to stop.
- *The Levite*—looked closer, but didn’t feel adequate to help. Dialed 911 as he went on his way.
- *The Soccer Mom*—distracted by squabbling kids and text messages, she didn’t even notice.
- *The Samaritan*—laid aside his plans to get involved and help the wounded man.
- *Other:* _____

2. Read “Kissing Frogs” on page 124. It’s been said that we should love people when they least expect it and least deserve it. Describe a time when someone loved you like that—or a time when you had the privilege of doing that for someone else. Describe the experience. _____

Going Deeper

3. Read 1 John 3:16–20 and answer the following questions:

According to verse 16, who is our example, and what did He do? _____

What warning are we given in verse 17? _____

Instead of offering words and lip service, how are we to love (verse 18)? _____

What amazing benefit (verses 19–20) do we derive from loving like that? _____

4. Which of the “Lessons from Good Sam” (page 132-33) speaks most to you? Which seems the most challenging? Why? _____

5. Do you have a friend or acquaintance who is struggling to escape graveclothes right now? Take a moment to pray for her or him. Ask what God would have you do to help love that person back to life. (It may be as simple as a phone call, a shared meal, or an encouraging note.) Whatever He lays on your heart, do it—knowing that God wants to love that person through you.

6. While we’ve discussed how we can help others unwind their graveclothes, what does Hebrews 12:1–6 tell us about unwinding our own? List at least five things we should do.

7. Read Isaiah 64:6 and Revelation 3:17. How does our insistence on wearing “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6) of our own righteousness keep us from experiencing true healing and freedom? According to Revelation 3:18–19, what does God “counsel” us to do?

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

BONUS CHAPTER: WHAT’S TRIPPING YOU UP?

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Even if you’re not a chronic tripper like me, you’ve probably had a klutzy moment or two. Share your most memorable one. _____

2. Which of the graveclothes responses identified in the “Tripping Points” sidebar on page 184 do you default to most often? What new response would you like to give next time your buttons are pushed? _____

Going Deeper

3. Though you considered this passage in your chapter 8 Bible study, I’d like to focus on it once again. Read Hebrews 12:2–3. (You may also want to read *The Message* version of this passage found at the end of the bonus chapter.) Describe what Jesus endured in order to be obedient to God. Now read Hebrews 12:4. What does this last verse say to your heart? _____

4. Compare 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 and Hebrews 12:5–11. List the different aspects of discipline that are mentioned and the reasons given for the importance of discipline in running the race we’re called to run _____

5. Hebrews 12:12–13 speaks of strengthening the weak places in our lives and making “level paths” for our feet. What does Proverbs 4:23–27 have to say about this subject? Practically speaking, what would making level paths look like in your life? _____

6. Read James 5:16. How has confessing your faults to another person helped unwind your graveclothes? _____

7. Early Methodists used to meet weekly for accountability. They would ask each other the following questions:

- Have you experienced any particular temptations during the past week?
- How did you react or respond to those temptations?
- Is there anything you are trying to keep secret, and, if so, what?

How would answering these questions help you shed graveclothes? Are there other questions you would add? Who would you allow to ask these hard questions of you?

8. What spoke most to you from this chapter? _____

CHAPTER NINE: LIVING RESURRECTED

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Have you ever witnessed an amazing transformation brought about by Christ in someone else's life? Describe it and how seeing it made you feel. _____

2. If you were asked to give a testimony of transformation in your life, what would you say? Is there an attitude or behavior you are currently asking the Lord to change?

Going Deeper

3. Complete Jesus's seven "I am" sayings listed below. Circle the one that currently means the most to you.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| John 6:35 | "I am the bread of life _____" |
| John 8:12 | "I am the light of the world _____" |
| John 10:9 | "I am the gate _____" |
| John 10:14–15 | "I am the good shepherd _____" |
| John 11:25 | "I am the resurrection and the life _____" |
| John 14:6 | "I am the way and the truth and the life _____" |
| John 15:5 | "I am the vine _____" |

4. Knowing the "Great I Am" (Jesus Himself) helps us better understand who we are as well. Look at Appendix C: "Who I Am in Christ." Choose one phrase from each of the three categories and write out the corresponding verse. Memorize one to include in your Holy Spirit "knowledge base." Write it on the back of this page.

5. List three things that currently “move you”—make you overreact or feel upset, worried, and/or fearful. Now describe how counting yourself dead (Romans 6:11) might help change your perspective and enable you to say along with Paul, “nor did I count my life dear to me” (Acts 20:24). If applicable, name a time in your life when your relationship with Christ helped change such a “lower nature” reaction. _____

6. Meditate on John 15:1–8. Read it several times and allow the verses to penetrate your heart. Circle or underline phrases that have extra meaning to you. In the context of these verses, what is the difference between striving and abiding? In practical terms, what would choosing to abide actually look like in your life? What would have to change? _____

7. Read George Mueller’s “secret of service” on page 151. Using it as a template, write an obituary for yourself, declaring your decision to die so that Christ might live.

8. What spoke most to you in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER TEN: LAUGHING LAZARUS

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Have you ever escaped a dangerous, life-threatening situation? Describe it and the emotions you felt after cheating death. If you've never actually experienced this, describe how you think you would feel. _____

2. Read the "Living in the Light of Eternity" sidebar on page 168. What aspect of living resurrected would you like to begin practicing right now? What single change in your life would help you do this? _____

Going Deeper

3. If you really believed that this world wasn't all there is, how would it affect the way you view the following aspects in your life? (Write your response first, then consider the verse given.)

Finances: _____

_____ (Matthew 6:19-21)

Worries: _____

_____ (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Sickness: _____

_____ (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)

Hardships: _____

_____ (James 1:12)

Persecution: _____

_____ (John 15:18-20)

4. Which of the following myths have you been able to discard as you've studied the story of Lazarus? Place a check mark (✓) by those you've let go of and a question mark (?) by the ones you'd *like* to let go of. Feel free to add any other myths about God's love you have become aware of.

___ We must earn God's favor.

___ If God loves us, terrible things should never happen to us.

___ Death is the very worst thing possible.

___ God is distant in our sufferings.

___ God's timing really stinks.

___ Tragedy is just tragedy—nothing good can come of it.

___ Other: _____

5. What do the following verses tell us about Jesus's return and the importance of being ready?

Luke 12:35-37 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 _____

2 Peter 3:4, 8-14 _____

6. Jesus promised that He would come back to take us to heaven so we could be together with Him (John 14:2–3). In light of that reality, consider the following questions:

• What do you imagine that day will be like? _____

• How close to Jesus do you hope to be? _____

• Spiritually, what do you need to begin doing here on earth so that when that day comes, you can be “known there” as you are “known here”? _____

7. Please don't rush through this last exercise. Take the time to allow the truth of the following hymn, “The Love of God,” to move from your head to your heart. Read the words slowly, then say or sing them again. Allow the immensity of the Father's love to

wash over your heart. Accept it as truth. Rest in it. Revel in it. Receive it. Then, write out a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to make God's love real in every corner of your heart.

*The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.*

Refrain:

*O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels' song.*

*When years of time shall pass away,
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men, who here refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure, shall still endure,
All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam's race—
The saints' and angels' song.*

*Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,*

*And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above,
Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.*

—Frederick M. Lehman³

8. Looking back on your journey through this book, what concept has made the biggest impact on you? In what ways has it changed the way you think or live—especially in the area of love-doubt? _____

JOURNAL THE JOURNEY

Date _____ What I read today _____

Best thing I marked today: *Reference*: _____

Thought: _____

How it impressed me: _____

(Extra sheet for photocopying)