

SIDE BY SIDE

WALKING WITH OTHERS IN WISDOM AND LOVE

STUDY GUIDE

EDWARD T. WELCH

Study Guide for

Side by Side

Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love

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Study guide for *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love*

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Introduction

Side by Side: Needy and Needed

“We all need help—that’s simply part of being human.” So writes Edward T. Welch, author of *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love*. It’s relatively easy to ask for or offer help when it comes to action, to things like unloading a moving truck or cooking a meal. But when it comes to soul help, we struggle. It’s awkward to ask for help, and it’s hard to know how to move into the personal space of another. But God designed us for togetherness. We aren’t meant to go through life’s difficulties all alone.

The problem is, we want others to think we’ve got our act together. We don’t want to come off as needy. For most of us, it’s much easier to be the one helping than the one in need of help! That’s because being needy is a sign of weakness. What we fail to realize is that neediness is a valuable asset. In reality, anything that reminds us of our dependence on God and on other people is a good thing. We need help, and we need to help others, and God has made provision for both.

God has designed us to walk side by side as an interdependent body of weak people. God grows and changes us through the help of others he is growing and changing—those who, like us, have been re-created in Christ and empowered by the Spirit. That is how life in the church works.

The Book and the Study Guide

Side by Side is divided into two main parts: being needy and being needed. The first part guides us in sharing our burdens; the second part guides us in bearing the burdens of others. Ed Welch shows this to be the rhythm of daily life: we need help, and we give help. He writes:

As we get the knack of this rhythm—being needy and needed—Jesus will be in it and over it. He was weak before we were; he was dependent on his Father and dependent even on mere human beings. He also came to serve rather than to be served, and he did it side by side. As far as we are able, we do this with one another. (p. 13)

This study guide is meant to be used with your reading of *Side by Side*. It has been designed for use by both groups and individuals. For each book chapter, the study guide provides a brief overview; questions for discussion (groups) or reflection (individuals); and a recap of the questions posed at the conclusion of each book chapter. The chapters are short, so for those of you holding a group study, you might want to combine some of the chapters into a single discussion. Nevertheless, these short chapters are dense, so you certainly cannot go wrong planning a separate discussion for each one. However you choose to approach the material, allow sufficient time for thoughtful processing and/or discussion.

Part 1

**We Are
Needy**

Life Is Hard

Overview

Let's face it—life is hard. Being realistic in what we say and think about life isn't the same thing as sinful grumbling. It's okay to acknowledge that our bodies get sick and age. It's not wrong to recognize that relationships—even good ones—require a lot of work. And since the fall of Adam in the garden of Eden, work and what it purchases can tyrannize us. How are we to cope? How do we avoid getting sucked down into the muck? We begin by simply telling God our reality. That's it—we just tell him.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Human beings flourish when they take their hardships to God and to others. How do the psalms help us in this regard? Welch references Psalm 30. Are there other particular psalms that aid you in spreading your troubles before the Lord?

2. Review *Figure 1* on page 18. Near the end of the chapter (p. 21), you were asked to consider what you would jot down in the circles drawn in *Figure 1*. Reflect on what you wrote down. What did you record as good and as hard?

3. Our physical bodies are one means by which we experience life's hardships. Illness affects everyone in various ways, and aging and death are inevitable until Jesus Christ returns. Additionally, there is the daily challenge of ensuring that our bodies are fed, clothed, and housed. How do Jesus's words in Matthew 6:25–34 help us keep these physical factors in perspective?

4. Welch points out that we all need people, even though relationships make life difficult. How has God used your relationships to grow your faith and deepen your dependence on him?

5. Welch writes, “Work and money shape our lives more than we know” (p. 19). How has money—or the lack of it—shaped your life? How have finances shaped your choice of work? Read the prayer of Agur in Proverbs 30:7–9. How does his prayer reflect biblical wisdom?

6. One way Scripture uses the word *world* is to refer to Satan and those who stand hand in hand with him against God. How does the world in this sense contribute to the difficulty of life? See 1 John 2:15–17. What God-given protection do we have from worldly assault? Review Ephesians 6:10–12.

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 21 and then consider them afresh below.

1. What are the top three hard things confronting you this week?

2. Have you taken time this week to speak your hard things to the Lord-who-hears?

Our Hearts Are Busy

Overview

Our hearts hold the essence of who we really are. Our emotions serve as a window to our hearts, as do our actions. And Scripture makes clear that both the good we do and the bad spring from our hearts. In sum, our hearts are busy! Concerning the heart, Welch writes, “It is our spiritual center. The evidence for its activity can be seen every day in the human mash-up of good, bad, fears, frustrations, joys, and sorrows. Trace these to the heart’s very core and we come face-to-face with the true God and the condition of our relationship to him” (p. 31).

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. In what ways are our hearts always busy?

2. Through a variety of images, Scripture shows us how our hearts function. What do we learn about the heart from the following images (see pp. 23–24):

- fountainhead (Prov. 4:23)

- well (Prov. 20:5; John 7:38)

- tree (Jer. 17:5–8)

- treasure chest (Matt. 6:19–21)

3. How do our emotions reveal what is most dear to us? Why is it important and helpful to pinpoint what triggers strong emotions in both ourselves and those we wish to help?

4. Why does offering help include seeing what is good in the one we wish to help?

5. Making a case from Scripture (Ex. 34:6; Rom. 2:15), Welch writes, “There is no such thing as independence” (p. 29). How does this truth shape your thinking about life’s overarching purpose and the goals you set?

6. An accurate knowledge of God is the most important thing we can ever have, and it’s something Paul prays for in Ephesians (1:16–17; 3:14–19). How do the petitions in Paul’s prayers line up with how you pray for yourself and for others?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 31 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Review your description of the heart. Is there anything in the description you would change at this point?

2. What links have you identified between your feelings and your relationship with God?

Hard Circumstances Meet Busy Hearts

Overview

We carry on internal conversations all the time, and troubles often jumpstart them: “Does God really care? Can he be trusted?” When troubles hit, it’s wise to listen first and foremost to God’s Word. It’s there that we hear his voice. And there we are reminded that during troublesome times it is safe to obey, rest in God’s promises, and cry out to God in our difficulty. Since that’s what Jesus did when pain threatened to crush him, why would we turn elsewhere?

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. How can our faith actually change our experience of suffering? (See p. 34.)
2. How do Jesus’s suffering and his cries to God shed light on our path as we face our own suffering? How does Psalm 22 help in this regard?
3. How did Jesus wage spiritual battle during his earthly suffering? See Psalm 22:3–5, 9–10 and Matthew 4:1–11.
4. Review Psalm 22 in its entirety. How does the conversation of the sufferer progress through the psalm?

5. Welch writes, "Hope is one of our most valued responses to the difficulties of life" (p. 40). Why is that true? (See Romans 5:1–5.)

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 40 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Discuss or reflect on the kind of psalm you are writing in the midst of a current difficulty.

2. Have you prayed through Psalm 22, making it a personal conversation between you and the Lord?

Sin Weighs a Lot

Overview

The trials and suffering we face threaten to overwhelm us at times. We'd do just about anything to get out from under the pain, and we pray for deliverance. But the truth is, our greatest need isn't deliverance from suffering—it's rescue from sin. So often we fail to get just how bad sin really is. But when we see the dreadful weight of it, blessings come.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What is our greatest problem, and what is our greatest need?
2. What is the link between suffering and sin?
3. In what ways is it good to talk about sin?
4. What blessings come from seeing the weight of our sin? Which of the three benefits identified on pages 44–45 have you experienced? Those benefits are as follows:
 - Seeing the weight of our sin drives us to Jesus.

- Seeing the weight of our sin brings humility.

- Seeing the weight of our sin is the beginning of power and confidence.

5. Welch writes, "Throughout biblical history, God has graciously let his people see the realities of their hearts" (p. 46). Name a specific way in which God has let you see the reality of your heart.

6. Why is confession of sin a necessary daily activity?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 47 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Do you find that you are more regularly saying, "I am a sinner, saved by grace"?

2. You were asked to record a particular way you hope to grow in confessing sin. Is this hope being realized? If not, what would you say is the hindrance?

Say “Help” to the Lord

Overview

Psalm 46:1 tells us that God is “a very present help in trouble,” yet we tend to resist turning to him until we’ve exhausted all other options. Why? Why do we look elsewhere when all the help we need is found in one place—in one person? Self-sufficiency is the reason, and this craving for autonomy keeps us from crying to the Lord for help. Additionally, sometimes we just don’t know what to say to God. But Scripture guides us here and leads us into ever-increasing fellowship with our Lord.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Why do we sometimes resist speaking to the Lord?
2. Why are we so prone to anxiety? What underlies our anxiety?
3. Welch writes that humility before our Father and freedom to speak what is on our hearts to Jesus are spiritual fundamentals (p. 50). Why is humility vital?
4. In what way do cries to God for help increase our knowledge of him?

5. The author of Psalm 46 reveals that he found great comfort in the knowledge of God. Review the psalm and note all you see there of God's character.

6. As you consider the life and ministry of the apostle Paul, why was he so joyful despite his many troubles? (See, e.g., 2 Cor. 4:17–18.)

7. How is resting in God a way to honor him? (See Ps. 62:1–2.)

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 56 and then consider them afresh below.

1. In chapter 5 Welch references a character, Shasta, from C. S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy* as a way to illustrate what happens when we don't turn and speak to God during times of trouble (see p. 49). Did the illustration of Shasta touch a nerve in you? Or is turning to God in difficulties typically your first impulse?

2. The rhythm that moves from seen personal circumstances to unseen spiritual realities about God is important. How are you practicing this rhythm? If you have not yet asked others how they go about it, do so now.

Say “Help” to Other People

Overview

It sounds counterintuitive, but our neediness actually serves other people. That’s why it’s good to practice the basics of being spiritually needy. *Side by Side* has us on a trajectory: we’re moving from feeling needy to knowing our deepest needs to asking the Lord for help, and now, here, to asking others for help. In chapter 6 we build on what we identified in the last chapter—humility facilitates help, both from God and from people.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Why is it harder to ask people for help than to ask God?
2. The apostle Paul asked others for prayer support (1 Thess. 5:25). Why was he able to ask for such help? Conversely, what hinders such a request?
3. How can we be confident of shaping our prayer requests in keeping with God’s will?
4. Review Joshua 4:1–7, where we see that the Israelites built monuments. How can we build such monuments today?

5. What is the link between gratitude and humility? How do these qualities factor into our relationships?

6. Why do spiritual matters deserve top priority when it comes to giving thanks?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 64 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Since first reading chapter 6, how have you said "help" to others?

2. Where in your life today are you still in need of asking for help? Who will you ask, and how will you go about it?

Part 2

**We Are
Needed**

Remember: We Have the Spirit

Overview

Up till now we've focused on our own neediness. We started there because recognizing our need for help breeds the humility we need to receive it. Once that happens, we can offer others the very help we've received. God delights to use the humble, because humble people rely on the Holy Spirit rather than on their own strength when it comes to helping others. Welch writes, "Are you feeling ordinary or a little less so? Do you have the Spirit? If so, you are just the person God has been looking for" (p. 71).

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. At the beginning of chapter 7, Welch recounts a personal experience in which he was greatly helped by friends (pp. 67–68). What did his friends do that proved so helpful?
2. Welch writes, "Followers of Jesus have all the competencies needed to encourage and instruct each other." How, according to Jeremiah 31:33–34, is this true?
3. How does the Holy Spirit empower believers?
4. What is unique about the wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit?

5. We read on page 69, “As Jesus is with us through the Spirit, his wisdom becomes a part of us.” How does this work out in our lives and relationships?

6. Based on 1 Corinthians 1:26–29, Welch writes, “God has determined that run-of-the-mill people do most of his work.” How does this truth aid you in both offering and asking for help?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 71 and then consider them afresh below.

1. You were asked to identify the qualifications of those who have helped you in times past. How has this exercise reshaped your own approach to helping people?

2. As you have given thought to the ways you have been most helped by others, what about those particular things has made them so helpful?

Move toward and Greet One Another

Overview

God always takes the initiative to care for us, even when we sin. That's what grace looks like. And because we're loved like that, we can take the initiative to love others—not just our friends, but also those we don't know well. Reaching out to people we don't know can be awkward and difficult. But through our union with Christ, it's a calling we can delight in carrying out.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. How can we reflect God in the way we move toward people?
2. What are some reasons moving toward people is hard? From your personal experience, what has been most difficult in this regard?
3. How are the greetings we offer a way to imitate the Lord?
4. According to Welch, what are some do's and don'ts for offering greetings in church?

5. How does Welch prioritize whom to greet in church (p. 76)? Do you concur with his assessment? Why or why not?

6. Welch writes, "A reasonable application of Scripture is to greet one person we don't know or don't know well every time we gather with others in the body of Christ" (p. 76). What has hindered you from living out this application?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 77 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Willpower is not enough to get us to move toward others. A better way, Welch says, is to consider how God moves toward us. What did you record where you were asked to note the ways God moves toward you?

2. Review the plan you made to move toward others. Have you carried out this plan? If not, what revisions are necessary to make it a reality?

Have Thoughtful Conversations

Overview

Connecting with others—we've been designed for that. We're hardwired to know and be known. But making it happen is sometimes easier said than done. In this chapter we see how relational connections are forged, and the process is not nearly as complicated as we have imagined. We get to know others by asking questions and by tapping into their affections. In this way we enter into their world, enabling us to walk with them side by side.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. What would you say is the best conversation you've had over the past few weeks? What qualifies it as such?
2. What prepared remarks or questions do you typically use as conversation starters? How effective have they been? If, upon consideration, you realize they have not been very effective, how will you revise them?
3. How do we move from generic conversation starters to more personal conversations?
4. What does it mean to "listen for signs of life"? (See p. 82.)

5. Read Psalm 139, which reveals God's intimate knowledge of each one of us. How does this revelation about God impact our relationship with him?

6. How does praying for others entrench us in the ongoing story of their lives?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 84 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Since reading this chapter in *Side by Side*, how have your conversation starters changed? Have you reached out to anyone in a deeper way?

2. Whom have you identified as a model of outreach? Describe why you identified this individual as someone skilled in moving toward others.

See the Good, Enjoy One Another

Overview

“God has determined that help takes place in the context of love and respect,” says Welch (p. 87), and for that to happen, we can’t let the bad we see overshadow the good. Cultivating a helping heart includes keeping our eyes open for good things in others. If we focus only on the hard or unattractive aspects of the people in our lives, we’ll find ourselves prone to criticize rather than help. This doesn’t mean we turn a blind eye to the realities of sin; rather, we simply remember that every human being has been created to reflect the Creator in unique ways. It’s a perspective that enables us not only to help others but also to enjoy them.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Welch writes, “As a general rule, we will not be able to have growing relationships in which we help other people unless we see the good in them, and they know we see good in them” (p. 87). Why is this true?

2. Why was the apostle Paul thankful for the Corinthian believers? How did his outlook open doors for the helpful instruction he wanted to give them? (See 1 Cor. 1:4–9.)

3. Where in our own lives can we act more like Paul did toward the Corinthians? How and with whom will we go about it?

4. We read on page 88, "Everything good is a reflection of the God who is good." How does this truth impact our view of people and our relationships?

5. Welch warns, "Don't let the unattractive features of someone's life blind you to the good" (p. 89). How can we keep the good in mind when the bad knocks us down?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 93 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Describe the people you enjoy and why you enjoy them.

2. Hopefully you have already told someone of the good you see in him or her. If so, step out toward someone else and do it again this week!

Walk Together, Tell Stories

Overview

Sharing stories and engaging in below-the-surface conversations are the ingredients for relationships that flourish. But it doesn't happen overnight. Going deeper with someone is a process in which openness is risked and trust is built. As we expose our hearts to others, we invite them to do the same, and we listen—really listen—when they open up. Along the way, we discover the rich blessings that come from the mutual sharing of both joys and sorrows.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Consider the short stories you have heard over the past 24 hours. How has each one presented an opportunity to press into the life of another?

2. Welch writes, “We should expect this general rule: the better you know other people, the more you enjoy and appreciate them—that is, the more you love them” (p. 97). How have you experienced this truth in your relationships?

3. Sharing a matching story might seem like a great way to connect with someone, but we read on pages 97–98 that doing so can actually have the opposite effect. Why is that true?

4. On page 98 we read, “Love naturally moves to what is important in someone’s story and follows up.” How can you apply this to a story—short or long—you’ve heard over the past week?

5. What are *word pictures*, and how do they help us know others? (See p. 98.)

6. What are the steps for processing someone’s story?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 99 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Review what you appreciate about others’ stories. What can you add at this point?

2. What do you want others to know about you? Why is this particular piece of information something you wish to share?

Have Compassion during Trouble

Overview

The steps we take to help others are actually simple reminders about how to be a friend. That's what Jesus did—he became a friend of sinners. A vital component of friendship is compassion. We rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15). Showing compassion includes knowing what to say and also what not to say.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Review the “ordinary steps” of how to be a friend (p. 101). Based on that list, are you a good friend? What area(s) needs work?

2. How does following the ordinary steps of friendship lead to the primary struggles of suffering and sin?

3. Welch writes, “Suffering is the trouble that comes *at* us. Sin is the trouble that comes *out of us*” (p. 102). Discuss or reflect on this truth from a biblical perspective.

4. Welch points out that we all tend to talk about our hardships more easily than we talk about our sin. Why do you think this is the case?

5. What are some practical ways to show compassion to the suffering? How does a biblical understanding of suffering enable our compassion?

6. Have you felt the sting of a thoughtless platitude in the midst of your suffering? As you think back on it, why was it so unhelpful? How has that experience helped shape how you speak to suffering people?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 110 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Describe a time you witnessed compassion. Where specifically was compassion revealed?

2. As you prepare to reach out in love to a suffering friend this week, review your growing list of do's and don'ts. Compare your list with that of others who are seeking to do the same thing.

3. Explain suffering from a biblical perspective.

Pray during Trouble

Overview

When a friend is troubled, the best way we can help is to pray. We pray *for* our friend, and we pray *with* our friend. When we pray together, “a two-dimensional conversation . . . goes three-dimensional. We come alongside the sufferer and bring God and the suffering together. We bring light into claustrophobic darkness,” Welch writes (p. 113). In this chapter we explore how to pray for hurting friends—prayers for healing, for comfort, and, above all, for faith.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Welch writes, “Sickness is always a spiritual matter in that it raises questions about God’s care and goodness, and it is an opportunity to grow in trust and obedience” (pp. 115–16). How does this truth impact our prayers for others as well as the words of comfort we offer?
2. Review 2 Corinthians 4:16–18. Do you share the perspective Paul reveals in this passage? Why or why not?
3. Welch says, “We honor God when we know his comfort” (p. 116), and we see how this is true in 2 Corinthians 1:3–4. Where have you seen that played out in your helping of others?
4. How is God’s comfort beneficial for both sufferer and helper?

5. Why is praying for the growth of sufferers' faith even more important than praying for their deliverance from suffering?

6. Why is following up with someone we've prayed for so vital?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 121 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Commit to praying this week not just *for* but *with* someone in need.

2. With whom do you need to follow up? Set a concrete time to do so.

Be Alert to Satan's Devices

Overview

Satan is a defeated foe, but we still need to be aware of his tricks. His goal with believers is to wreck their faith, and during times of hardship, he moves in to tempt, accuse, and confuse. How do we recognize Satan's tactics and counteract them? This chapter seeks to answer those questions by examining in God's Word what happened in four different gardens.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. God tests, but Satan tempts. How was that played out in the garden of Eden? See Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–5. Welch writes, "Remembering what happened in Eden will help us be alert to how a sufferer is being tempted or accused by Satan" (p. 125). How does this work out?

2. How specifically did Jesus refute the lies of Satan?

3. On page 126 we read, "Since we have the Spirit, the Word, and prayer, we can be hopeful and stand firm against Satan as we go through our daily wildernesses." How can we live this out practically?

4. Why does suffering tend to summon Satan? How does Ephesians 6:10–18 equip us to counter his attacks?

5. Studying what happened in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–38) helps us know what to do when we see a spiritual battle raging in someone's heart. How exactly does knowledge of the Gethsemane incident help us?

6. Review the list of strategies we can employ against Satan's strategies (pp. 128–29). Which ones speak most loudly to you at present? Are there any additional strategies you could add to this list?

7. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul makes clear that knowledge of Satan's designs keeps us from being outwitted by him. What from this chapter has aided your understanding of and therefore your ability to withstand Satan's schemes?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 130 and then consider them afresh below.

1. How can you identify a spiritual battle going on in the life of a friend or loved one? If you have identified one recently, how have you addressed it?

2. Review Ephesians 6:10–18. Using the words of this passage, write out a prayer that addresses a particular battle going on either in your life or in the life of a friend.

Prepare to Talk about Sin

Overview

Do you find it easier to talk with friends about your suffering than about your sin? If so, you're not alone. Most of us find it difficult to bring our sin into the light. Yet it's even more challenging when the sin that needs discussion is not our own but our friend's. We're not sure what to say without coming across as judgmental, so we debate whether to say anything at all. But walking side by side with others can't exclude discussions about sin. What we need is wisdom in how to go about it.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Talking about sin is typically perceived as impolite. Why is this the case?
2. Welch writes, "Suffering hurts more, but sin is more serious" (p. 134). How is that true?
3. Why is humility a prerequisite to helping others deal with sin?
4. Why is patience an essential feature of love? Give biblical backing in your answer. When is patience *not* the best course?

5. We read on page 136, "Patience is more interested in direction and less interested in how fast people are changing." Based on that insight, how are you doing with patience?

6. Building up another before addressing his or her sin is sometimes the best and most loving approach. Toward whom do you need to apply this teaching?

7. How do mitigating circumstances factor into our attempts to help others deal with sin?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 139 and then consider them afresh below.

1. If you have ever been confronted about sin in a helpful way, describe what made the confrontation helpful.

2. If you have ever been confronted about sin in an unhelpful way, describe what made the confrontation hurtful.

3. Sometimes it is better to remain silent about the sin we see in someone. How can we discern when to speak up and when to be silent?

4. Are you hesitating to talk to a friend about sin? If so, is your hesitation rooted in love or in fear?

Help Fellow Sinners

Overview

We have already established that our sin is more problematic than our suffering. And although talking about sin is difficult, God calls us to help one another deal with it. Only then will we flourish in the ways God intends. Being alert to temptation and what triggers it—both in ourselves and in those with whom we walk—is an important part of growing up in our faith and helping others do likewise. We also need wisdom for handling failure, for times when we've succumbed to temptation. And most of all, we need to help one another see that where sin abounds, God's grace abounds more (Rom. 5:20).

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. How does wealth make one vulnerable to temptation? How about solitude?

2. How are we helped by bringing temptations out into the open?

3. Paul writes: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Name specific ways you have seen this work out in your own life.

4. Why do many addictions have their roots in wilderness times?

5. On page 143 Welch gives us a set of three questions we can ask one another about our various temptations. Do you feel able both to ask and to answer those questions? Why or why not?

6. At times we must decide whether sin we witness someone committing needs to be called out or covered. How do we decide? When thinking through our approach, what factors should *not* be determinative?

7. Welch writes, "Sin is really about the Lord" (p. 147). Explain what he means.

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 152 and then consider them afresh below.

1. After reading chapter 16, you were asked to note what stands out to you about this chapter. Has your answer changed since then?

2. Concerning the challenges issued in this chapter, are you motivated to take them on, or are you a bit intimidated? If the latter, describe what seems so daunting.

Keep *the* Story in View

Overview

All through the Old Testament, God's people are exhorted to remember his mighty works on their behalf. Remembering was a big deal then, and it's just as important in our day. When troubles come, when sin blinds, we can so easily forget the gospel of God's grace to us in Jesus Christ. Remembering this story is how we help one another to stay focused on the path to joy and blessing. Welch concludes *Side by Side* with the most crucial helping tool of all: "We want to be able to tell and retell the story and have it shape us. This will help us to remember it and quickly return to it when life's troubles come our way" (p. 156).

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Meditate afresh on Ephesians 1:3–14. In your own words, describe how Paul tells the gospel story in this passage.

2. We see in Ephesians 1:4–5 that believers are chosen by God and predestined for adoption. Welch asks us to consider what this part of our story has to do with past victimization, rejection, or loss. How would you answer?

3. How does a wrong view of our sinfulness marginalize Jesus from daily life? How does Ephesians 1:7–9 provide a corrective?

4. Welch writes, "Hope is essential to human life" (p. 158). Why is this true?

5. How does the fact of future glory practically change how we live today?

Recap

Review your answers to the questions on page 160 and then consider them afresh below.

1. Recount your own telling of the master story and name your favorite part.

2. From a practical standpoint, how does telling and retelling the story change your everyday life?



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