

GETTING CONNECTED

HEALING

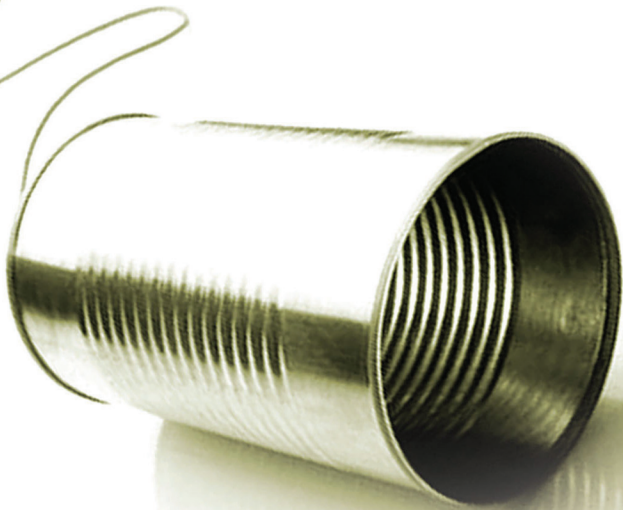
OURSELVES

AND OUR

RELATIONSHIPS

LARRY CRABB

Author of the Bestselling INSIDE OUT



Discussion and Study Guide Included

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

PUBLISHED BY W PUBLISHING GROUP
Nashville, Tennessee

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e-mail SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com.

Study Guide produced with the assistance of The Livingstone Corporation: Neil Wilson.

Published in association with Sealy M. Yates,
Literary Agent, Orange, California.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Crabb, Lawrence, J.

Connecting: healing for ourselves and our relationships
a radical new vision / Larry Crabb.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-8499-1413-2 (hc)

ISBN-10 0-8499-4529-1 (repak)

ISBN-13 978-0-8499-4529-8 (repak)

1. Interpersonal relations—Religious aspects—Christianity.

I. Title.

BV4597.52.C7 1997

248.4—dc21

97-26524

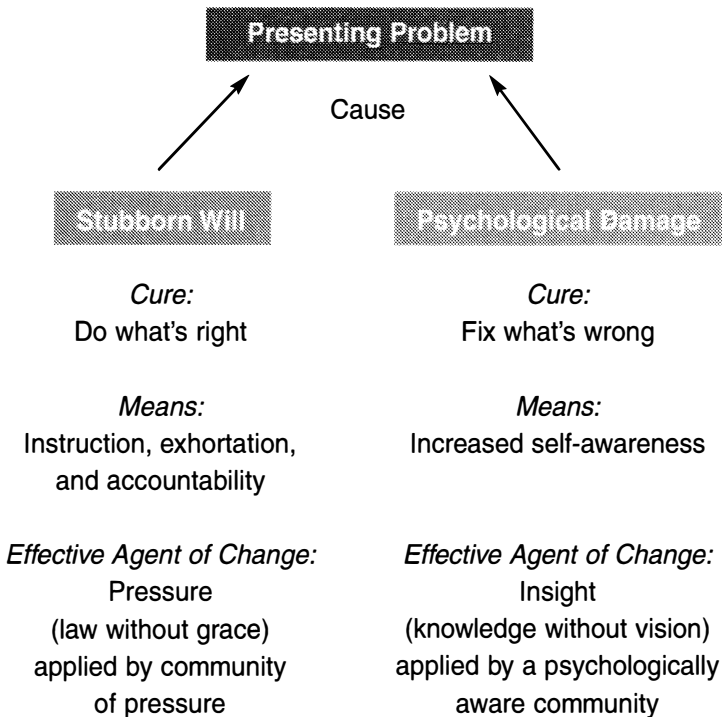
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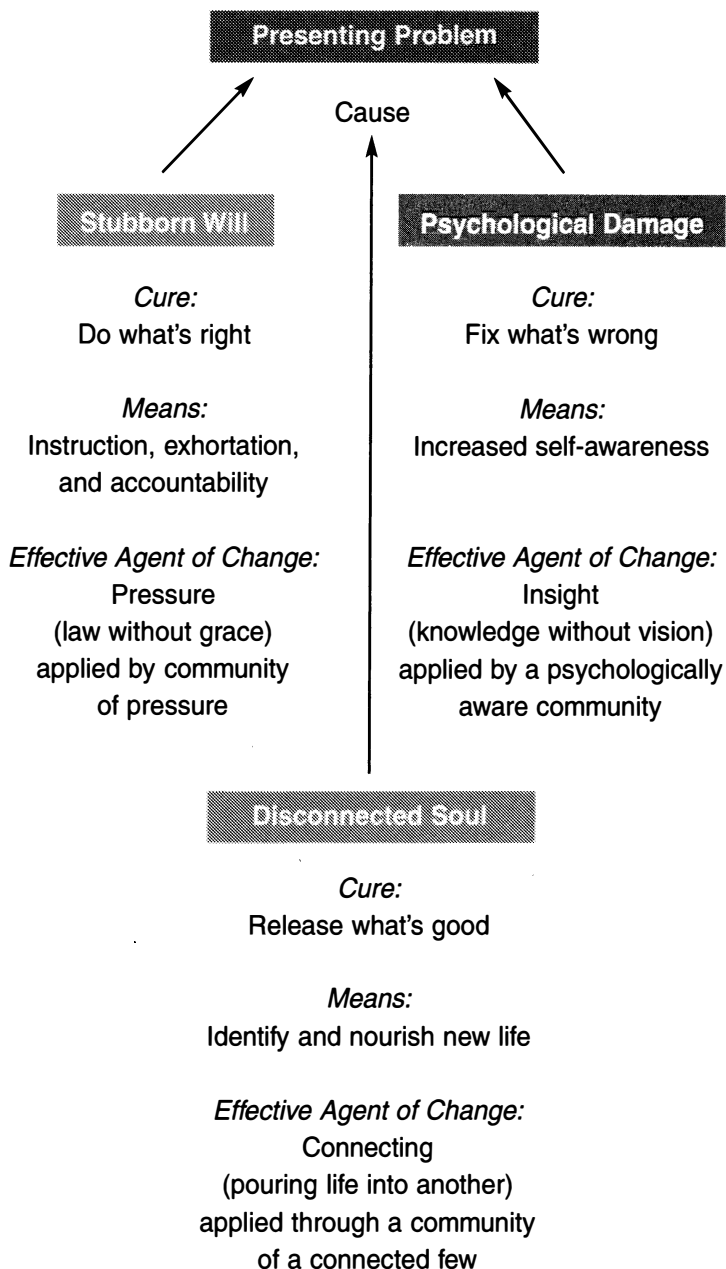
Printed in the United States of America

07 08 09 RRD 10 9 8

CHAPTER 4

Designed to Connect

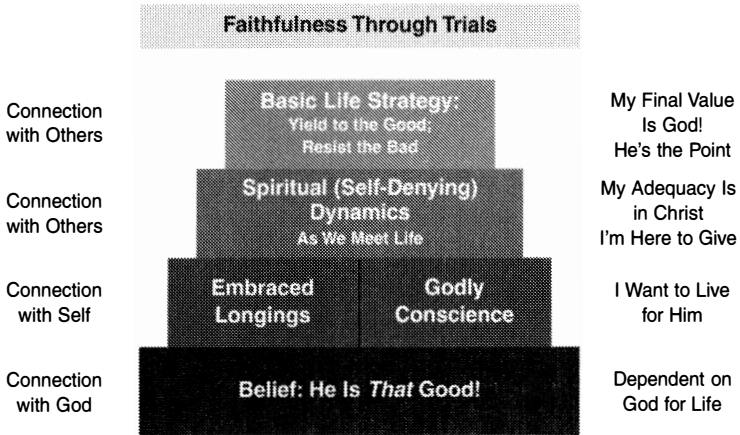




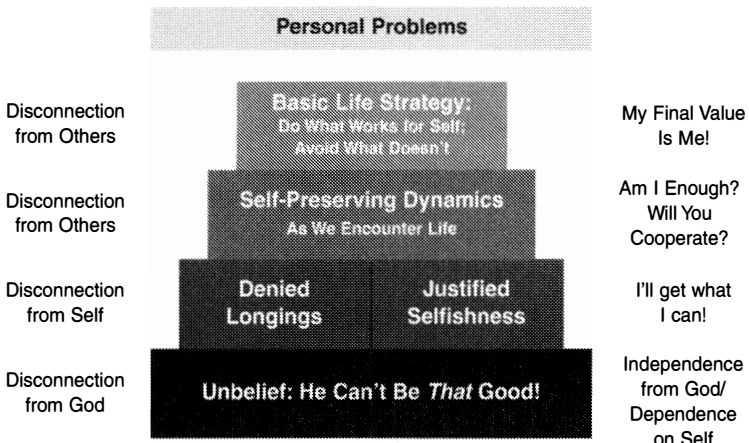
CHAPTER 8

What's Good about Us?

A New Heart The Spirit Where Good Urges Come From



The Flesh or The Old Heart Where Bad Urges Come From



CHAPTER 13

Connecting in the Heat of Battle

METAPHOR SUMMARY

Metaphor #1: City Building

Core Agenda:	I will make my life work through resources I can control.
Preoccupying Question:	"Am I adequate?"
Deep Fear:	Inadequacy
Angry Demand:	"Affirm me!"
Opportunity for False Connection:	Working with people whose mutual competencies enable them to achieve a common goal
Related Urges:	Jealousy Enjoyment of another's misfortune Dependence on compliments Hypersensitivity to criticism
God's Strategy for Helping:	Time in the desert
The Message of Connection:	"I believe in you."
New Question:	"What can I give?"

Metaphor #2: Fire Lighting

Core Agenda:	I will find a plan that I know will work.
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Preoccupying Question:	“Am I right?”
Deep Fear:	Confusion
Angry Demand:	“Agree with me.” “Tell me what will work.”
Opportunity for False Connection:	Finding people who agree with us and dogmatically asserting the wisdom of our understanding while judging others who see things differently
Related Urges:	Desire to divide Eagerness to criticize Love of argument Condescending spirit
God’s Strategy for Helping:	Deepening the darkness
The Message of Connection:	“You long to trust him.”
New Question:	“Whom do I trust?”

Metaphor #3: Wall Whitewashing

Core Agenda:	I will protect myself against the difficulties of life; that is my priority.
Preoccupying Question:	“Am I safe?”
Deep Fear:	Disaster
Angry Demand:	“Align with me.” (Help me protect myself.)
Opportunity for False Connection:	Living in community with folks who emphasize only the blessings of life and attribute those blessings to something they’ve done
Related Urges:	Obsessive tendencies Shallow spirituality Disciplined habits Unadventurous

God's Strategy for Helping:	Introducing difficulties that cannot be protected against
The Message of Connection:	"I see courage in you."
New Question:	"Am I in good enough hands to aggressively move into life?"

Metaphor #4: Well Digging

Core Agenda:	I want to feel good when I want to and in a way that eliminates all pain, if only for a moment.
Preoccupying Question:	"Am I fulfilled?"
Deep Fear:	Emptiness
Angry Demand:	Acquiescence: "Cooperate with my efforts to feel good and don't judge me."
Opportunity for False Connection:	Associating with superficial people who have no higher goal than enjoying life
Related Urges:	Impatience Insensitivity Indulgence Greed
God's Strategy for Helping:	Exposing the damage in others that selfishness can cause
The Message of Connection:	"You're forgiven."
New Question:	"How can I bless?"

CONNECTING

STUDY AND
ACTION GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY AND ACTION GUIDE



This guide has been prepared for use by individuals as well as groups. The following suggestions relate to this dual purpose. Depending on the scope of each chapter, some topics have resulted in three “For Study” questions while some have required six questions to cover the content adequately. You may discover that many other questions surface as you work through this book. They can all be useful in the process of connecting.

PERSONAL STUDY

Space is provided under each of the “For Study” questions, allowing you to jot down your responses and reflections. Consider using a notebook (suggested in the first “For Action” section) to expand the impact of this study in your life.

Note that the “For Study” questions have been designed to help you review your understanding of the chapters and to personalize the insights.

Most of the “For Action” steps are personal, but many of them will require that you involve other people in carrying them out.

Remember that the underlying vision of *Connecting* requires more than one person. A connection, in the language of this book, will always involve two or more people and God’s work in and through their lives.

GROUP STUDY

When used in a group setting, discussion will be enhanced if the participants work through the questions in advance or take a few moments to jot down their reflections before the group enters into discussion.

Make it a regular habit as a group to review your progress in the process of connecting as it develops in your group. Identify special challenges and enlist the entire group's help in seeking answers from the book and from Scripture.

Agree as a group to note the book's use of Scripture passages, and refer to those verses in discussing the principles and insights in *Connecting*.

INTRODUCTORY SESSION



FOR STUDY

1. If someone spotted you reading this book and asked, “What’s *Connecting* about?” how would you begin to answer that person based on the Introduction?
2. The author uses Ephesians 4:15–16 to explain the key functions of the church. How does “connecting” parallel the language of Scripture?
3. What does the author mean by the twofold burden under which he was working as he wrote this book?

4. A quarter of a century of counseling and teaching experience led Dr. Crabb to three significant conclusions. How do you respond to his conclusions?

5. Describe in your own words the three approaches referred to in the Introduction: (a) moralistic approaches, (b) therapeutic approaches, and (c) spiritually healing relationships. How do they compare to each other, and why does the author prefer the third approach?

6. As he closes the Introduction, Dr. Crabb makes two statements that reveal his conviction and purpose in writing:

“God has given us the power to be his instrument in healing souls. That power is waiting to be released.”

“When you finish reading this book, I think you will have a new understanding of what you can give to others and how you can make a powerful difference in their lives and in your own.”

In what ways do these statements express your own convictions and desires?

FOR ACTION

1. Get a small notebook to keep with your *Connecting* volume. As you read each chapter, and create reminder notes for yourself that highlight the impact of Larry Crabb's insights.
2. The subtitle of *Connecting* is *Healing for Ourselves and Our Relationships*. In your notebook, begin a list of people who represent relationships in your life that you believe need healing. Use the list as a prayer reminder as you read.

CHAPTER 1

Kep's Story

FOR STUDY

1. How does the author, with the benefit of hindsight, summarize what he did wrong in his relationship with his sons and his wife?
2. How did the crisis created by Kep's expulsion from college become what his father now calls an "opportunity"?
3. What biblical stories come to mind that are examples of crises that became opportunities?
4. What events in your life would you now guess might have been opportunities hidden inside disasters?

FOR ACTION

1. Make it a point during the next day or so to reflect on the last few months. Begin to develop a list of "disasters." Under each crisis, discuss how that crisis might have been (or has proven to be) an opportunity.
2. Tell at least one other person about an opportunity wrapped in a crisis in your life.

CHAPTER 2

Three Ingredients of Healing Community

FOR STUDY

1. This chapter in *Connecting* begins with a confession that a successful counselor and teacher still felt something was missing in his life. He eventually describes what was missing. What was his missing ingredient? How much do you see that same void in your own life?
2. In this chapter, the author includes a two-part question that “beats against” his conscience: “Do I know the good so intimately that I gladly endure whatever hardship lies on the path to more of it? Do I know how to share that good with others?” In what ways do those questions describe your experience of life as a Christian?

3. Do you agree with his conclusion that approaches depending on merely “understanding problems” or “exhorting worthy change” are ultimately inadequate?

4. Respond to the following statement: “But the absolute center of what he [God] does to help us change is to reveal himself to us, to give us a taste of what he’s really like, and to pour his life into us.” Do you agree? Why?

5. Review the three actions God takes to help us become more like Christ:

A. God provides . . .

B. God searches . . .

C. God exposes . . .

Complete each statement. What do these actions confirm for you about God's character?

6. How do God's actions help you clarify your view of the Christian life?

FOR ACTION

1. Look again at your description of God's three connecting actions (question 5 above). For each aspect of God's connecting role, describe how you have experienced that part of God's work in your life:

A. God provided for me by . . .

B. God sought me by . . .

C. God exposed me by . . .

Take some time to thank God for these specific evidences of his love for you.

2. The author points out, “To whatever degree you offer people these three ingredients, you will have a powerful impact on their lives.” Identify two people close to you into whose lives you want to more intentionally pour these connecting elements. Begin to pray for opportunities.

CHAPTER 3

Restored through Reconnecting

FOR STUDY

1. Describe each of the four possible responses to a friend's problem:

A. I *retreat* when I . . .

B. I *repair* when I . . .

C. I *refer* when I . . .

D. I *reconnect* when I . . .

What makes the last response so different from the other three?

2. In this chapter the author asks, "Is the terrifying longing for connection evidence of weakness or design?" What was your initial reaction to this question?
3. In the light and language of this chapter, what *does* it take to be a powerful person?

FOR ACTION

1. Identify someone who has reconnected you with God in a recent crisis (even if that person was unaware of his or her effect on you). Consider how you might thank that person.
2. Consult again the list you began of relationships that you felt needed healing. What could you do in one of those relationships to help that person reconnect with God and others?

CHAPTER 4

Designed to Connect

FOR STUDY

1. Using a positive or negative example from your own life, explain the significance to you of the title of this chapter: “Designed to Connect.”
2. In what specific ways are connecting people powerful, and how do you see that power benefiting the body of Christ?
3. How do the two charts in this PDF help you understand that connecting goes beyond controlling a stubborn will or fixing a damaged psyche?

FOR ACTION

1. List and describe at least three groups in which you regularly participate. Evaluate each one based on the degree to which it treats its

members as: (a) stubborn wills, (b) psychologically damaged people, and (c) disconnected souls.

Ask God to help you become a greater connecting force in the groups to which you belong.

2. The profile of powerful connectors on in this chapter includes three characteristics:

A. Powerful people can see . . .

B. Powerful people believe . . .

C. Powerful people accept the challenge . . .

Complete each sentence and rank yourself from 1 to 10 (1 being lowest and 10 being highest) on the degree to which you practice that power in the groups to which you belong.

CHAPTER 5

Connecting: The Center of Life

FOR STUDY

1. Describe an incident in which someone treated you with the kind of friendship referred to in Proverbs 27:6: "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses."
2. How did this chapter deepen your understanding of and desire for "connecting"?
3. Disconnection occurs when "the deepest part of who we are is vibrantly attached to no one, where we are profoundly unknown and therefore experience neither the thrill of being believed in nor the joy of loving or being loved." In what ways does this definition of "disconnection" relate to parts of your life?

FOR ACTION

1. Refer back to your list of relationships requiring healing in your life. In what ways does each one of them illustrate disconnection? In each case, try to identify when the last time was that you offered that relationship a connecting action.
2. Discuss with several people you trust what would be required in order to do the kind of friendly intervention described in Proverbs 27:6 at the beginning of this chapter. Consider asking the group to give you feedback on your connecting skills.

CHAPTER 6

Connection and Vision

FOR STUDY

1. What did you first think when the idea of the Trinity was introduced as the answer to the question of whether connecting is really that central?
2. Summarize the three-part answer given to the complex question: "How does this happen? . . . What is the bridge that draws the life of Christ out of one person's heart and carries it across the distance between two people into the deepest recesses of the other person's heart?" How do these three points ring true in your life?
3. In what ways does the concept of connecting clarify for you what it means to be made in God's image?

FOR ACTION

1. Think of three people whom you would be comfortable asking the question "What does it mean to you to be made in God's image?" Before you ask them, however, identify at least one quality or characteristic for each person that you can use to complete the sentence, "Here's how I've noticed God's image in you." After each person has given you his or her answers, thank him or her and then tell that person what you've been thinking about him or her.
2. Identify four or five godly qualities in yourself that you would like to see expand and increase. Ask several people (perhaps some of those from the first step) to give you feedback on the degree to which they see those qualities in you. Give them a scale to use, and, whatever "grade" they give you, follow up with the question, "Can you think of one thing I could do or change to increase that quality in my life?"

CHAPTER 7

Vision in the Highest

FOR STUDY

1. Based on this chapter and the last one, what is vision, particularly as it relates to connecting?
2. What were your main thoughts and feelings during the opening paragraphs of this chapter as you tried to imagine God functioning as a single complex being before the creation?
3. What meaningful insights or questions did you have as you “listened in” on the Trinity discussing the creation of the human race?
4. How do the three public declarations of pleasure by God the Father during Jesus’ ministry reveal God’s vision of the Son?

5. In what ways do joy, fun, and passion affect vision in connecting?
6. Jot down some thoughts on how you would answer these two rhetorical questions included in this chapter:

What would it be like if we had a vision for each other, if we could see the lost glory in ourselves, our family, and our friends? What would the effect on your sons or daughters be if they realized that you were caught up with the possibilities of restored glory, of what they could become—not successful, talented, good-looking, or rich, but kind, strong, and self-assured, fully alive?

FOR ACTION

1. Go back to your list of relationships needing healing. Take each name and begin to write out your vision for that person. Ask God for wisdom and perception as you reflect on his vision for those persons. Refer to the explanation of power in this chapter as you develop these vision statements.
2. Begin to look for an occasion, or schedule a time with one or more of those people, to share the results of your thinking. Impress upon them that you are learning to think of others in a new way, attempting to look at them as God sees them. Second Corinthians 5:16–21 can offer valuable help, particularly if we think of “reconciling” as “connecting.”

CHAPTER 8

What's Good about Us?

FOR STUDY

1. Expand on the statement, "Use the word *connection* lightly and you will report many experiences of it. Use it richly, and you'll feel lonely."
2. Describe specific ways you have experienced the truth of the statement: "The affections, passions, and inclinations that consistently prompted Christ have been given to us so that we might reflect the character of God primarily in the way we relate."
3. The book asks the question "How do we know whether we're prompted by the energy of Christ or a less noble motive?" How do you personally respond to the answer provided for that question: "We must discern what is deepest within us as we examine our hearts in God's presence, open to the input of godly friends"

and prayerfully meditating on appropriate Scripture”? How does your approach to relating with people compare to this one?

4. Why do you think we so often fail to make connection?

5. The title of this chapter poses the question “What’s good about us?” Summarize what you’ve learned in this chapter that answers this question.

6. Explain the foundational difference between believing that “God is *that* good” and believing “God can’t be *that* good.”

FOR ACTION

1. Make a copy of the upper diagram included in this PDF for chapter 8. Annotate what each level means in your life and discuss it with the rest of your group. If you’re not in a group at this point, ask one or two friends to help you work through the diagram. They may well become your small group!

2. Describe your “joy impulse” to your group. Perhaps you don’t jump up and down with delight, but what do you do? Ask God to help you begin to feel and express those actions when you see others with whom you have connected, or with whom you desire to connect.

CHAPTER 9

The Enemy Within

FOR STUDY

1. Who is the enemy inside you who must be strangled, shot, killed, and resisted without quarter? Why?
2. What are some of the half measures that simply allow the enemy to gain more ground? Why is this true?
3. How do you relate to the four sinful agendas that Scripture indicates as the tactics of fleshly living? Which one gives you the most trouble?

FOR ACTION

1. As part of your small group discussion, brainstorm examples of each of the four “agendas that enliven the flesh.” Share with one another what you have found to be effective neutralizing or defeating tactics to (in the language of this chapter) identify the enemy and shoot him.
2. Return to your list of relationships that need healing. With the four flesh-enlivening tactics in mind, read through the list slowly. Ask yourself whether you have been using the enemy’s operating procedures in the way you handle each person. As you continue to read, make it a point to seek “another way” that defeats and eliminates your “usual way of handling things.”

CHAPTER 10

Dying Together to Live Together

FOR STUDY

1. How does the death we are called to experience as Christians differ from the death Jesus experienced as our Savior?
2. Using specific examples, explain the meaning of the key statement from this chapter: "But to *grow* as Christians, we must die to the flesh, repeatedly, daily, until we're home."
3. What kinds of settings, content, and cautions fit the description of healthy confession included in this chapter?

FOR ACTION

1. Conduct your own experiment similar to the author's by asking at least ten Christians if they have someone in their lives whose strength and wisdom encourages them to make themselves fully known.
2. Share with the members of your small group your responses to the author's personal revelations in the last part of this chapter. How did he connect with you? To what degree have you ever felt that same kind of transparency, risk, and helplessness? Did his confession draw you or repel you?

CHAPTER 11

Urges to Be Killed

FOR STUDY

1. What are the most obvious obstacles in your heart, mind, and life to becoming a connecting person?
2. Read James 1:19–25 and describe how you usually use God's Word when it comes to letting him speak into your life.
3. How would you illustrate from your own experiences the first two metaphors (city building and fire lighting) explained in this chapter?

A. I've been a city builder when I've . . .

B. I've been a fire lighter when I've . . .

4. What does God have against "city building"?
5. Is it really better to light a candle than to curse the darkness—or is there an even better choice?
6. How have you discovered the truth: "It is therefore impossible to reduce all mystery to understandable categories"? Do you agree that "some level of confusion must remain"?

FOR ACTION

1. Because city building is such a pervasive characteristic of living, you may have only a "starter list" of instances when you function with this attitude. Start a list of city-building activities or mind-sets that you can see in your life. Make a copy of your list and entrust it to

someone else, as long as you are willing to say to God and that person, "I'm giving you this list as a way of declaring that the title and supervision of all city-building activities in my life belong to God." Add to the list as you make further discoveries.

- 2 After discussing the questions included at the end of this chapter, give each member of the group the opportunity to share "fire lighting" temptations in his or her life that other group members can pray about with him or her. Don't make this as much a "problem-solving" time as a time for listening, supporting, and connecting,

CHAPTER 12

Two More Urges to Be Killed

FOR STUDY

1. Why doesn't God honor our goal to achieve safety?
2. Compare and contrast what this chapter reveals about wall white-washers and what Jesus pointed out about those who persisted in living like whitewashed tombs (see Matthew 23:27–28).
3. In what ways does the biblical goal of contentment (1 Timothy 6:6–10) avoid the pitfalls of well digging?

FOR ACTION

1. How many people in your life have your permission to look over the whitewashed walls and peek inside the enclosure that hides your well-digging operations? Discuss with your group how you can identify someone you can trust that much.
2. The story of the man plunged into the darkness of the well of pornography includes an action plan he undertook with the help of friends to kill that urge. Review that story and consider whether there are any urges in your life that require the same kind of radical action right now.

CHAPTER 13

Connecting in the Heat of Battle

FOR STUDY

1. Based on this chapter, how would you explain the way in which connecting helps us kill our bad urges?
2. Summarize in your own words what it means to kill these destructive urges. Once they're dead, who gives them life again?
3. How does the following statement affect your outlook on the situations in your life right now? "It is now our job to 'count [our] selves dead to sin' (Rom. 6:11), to clearly see that the flesh (our demand that we find adequacy, confidence, safety, and satisfaction without giving up our independence) is a worn-out, useless approach to life."

FOR ACTION

1. Take some time in a small group session to discuss the four metaphor charts for this chapter, which are included in this PDF for reference. Have one person read the category and another read the response. After each metaphor, leave the floor open for anyone who wants to comment or share a struggle in that particular area.
2. This chapter emphasizes the importance of learning to see the goodness that God has built into and is calling out of others. Have each person in the group identify a good quality in each other person, then take time to verbalize those glimpses of good to one another.

CHAPTER 14

It's Time to Connect

FOR STUDY

1. If you were to die today and in six weeks a “memory milestone gathering” was held in your honor, how do you think you would be remembered? What three characteristics would be most often mentioned?
2. What deep good in you did this chapter touch or call out of you?
3. Describe a situation in your life during which you witnessed the same kind of process described in this chapter when friends gathered with Rachael to remember her dad. Identify the three elements explained in this chapter: (a) people entered the battle for someone’s soul; (b) they believed God could strengthen

- (c) that person and they released the energy of Christ within them on that person's behalf.

FOR ACTION

1. Discuss with your small group the possibility of identifying someone within the group or close to the group members for whom you could provide this kind of affirming and connecting experience.

2. Before applying this approach with someone outside the group, practice with one or more members of the group, combining a genuine effort to connect with a follow-up time of debriefing and exploring how the effort could be more effective.

CHAPTER 15

Entering the Real Battle

FOR STUDY

1. How do you go about answering the constant question that permeates every human encounter: What can we talk about in one another's lives that will lead to the deepest possible connection?
2. The beginning of this chapter is filled with personal questions. Whose names come to mind as you read the following:
 - A. Who has worked as hard as a paramedic in the spiritual area to know what battle is going on in my soul?
 - B. Who has been that concerned about my personal struggles?

C. Do I really have to pay someone to be asked that many questions?

D. Whose questions would I be willing to answer if they were asked?

3. On a deeper level, how did you respond to the series of personal questions found in this chapter?

A. Do I trust him [God] to continue working in my life even when I am plagued by crippling emotions?

B. Do I know him well enough to turn to him for comfort rather than demand relief from my pain through whatever means are available?

C. Do I love him so deeply that I welcome additional suffering that might draw my soul closer to him?

D. Will I pay *any* price to know him well?

FOR ACTION

1. Review with your group the series of principles explained in this chapter. Go beyond identifying two people with whom you intend to “enter the battle” for their souls. As you discuss each principle, pair up and practice what it means to interact with someone that way.
2. Then, follow the prayer plan that follows the first principle for the two people whose soul-battle you intend to enter.

CHAPTER 16

Developing a Vision

FOR STUDY

1. According to this chapter, what does it mean to develop a vision?
2. Why aren't visions created or invented?
3. As this chapter compares them, what value can you see in deliberately "thinking vision" rather than "thinking problems"?
4. How did you respond to "listening in" as the Trinity discussed the decision to create a unique line of beings with whom God could have intimate fellowship?

5. Explain the importance of the following statement found in this chapter: "A vision we give to others of who and what they could become has power when it echoes what the Spirit has already spoken into their souls."

6. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusion stated in this chapter: "Counseling theories would do well to focus more on their ideal of emotional health than on either pathology or treatment technique"? Why?

FOR ACTION

1. Discuss in your small group each of the five implications described in this chapter. Group members should aim to provide at least one example of each implication in a typical life situation.

2. Take turns using the prayer sample in this chapter to pray for the two or three people into whose soul-battles you have chosen to enter. Adapt the prayer sample to fit the particular relationship.

CHAPTER 17

Releasing the Energy

FOR STUDY

1. Why do you think the prayers recorded at the beginning of this chapter are examples of effective vision prayers?
2. What do those prayers have in common?
3. How have you participated in the battle for someone's soul this week? What were the results?
4. What major problem(s) do those who teach that God's ultimate purpose is to give us health and wealth in this life overlook in their view of God?

5. Respond to this rhetorical question from this chapter: "Could it be that training in counseling has become so necessary and valued because few Christians know what it means to release the energy of Christ from within them into the souls of others?"

6. To what extent have you become convinced of the author's contention that "the person best qualified to engage with us at those levels [deepest battles, painful memories, secret sins] is the person most filled with the energy of Christ"?

FOR ACTION

1. Discuss and identify with your group several people in the group's circle of acquaintances who appear to have mastered the skills of connecting. If one or more of those people are willing, invite them to speak to the group about how they came to relate to people the way you've all observed. (This should be fascinating, particularly if they haven't read this book!)

2. Although some of this may have already occurred as you discussed and personalized the connecting principle, pair up in your group and take time to give one another feedback on the following question: What would have to change in my relational skills in order for me to connect more effectively?

APPENDICES



FOR STUDY

1. How would you summarize your own attitude and commitment to healing through words? If you are a professional counselor or church leader, how was Appendix B helpful? What other questions remain on your mind?
2. Describe your response to the author's analysis of the various therapeutic models in Appendix A as well as his comments throughout the book. Do you find yourself on the whole disagreeing or agreeing? Why?
3. What do you think would happen if churches took seriously and actually implemented the new model as their expectation for member relationships? How accurately has the author foreseen the results?

FOR ACTION

1. Embark as a small group on some field studies of local churches that seem to reflect characteristics of connecting. Try to identify how the members of these churches came to see and treat one another the way they do.
2. Using Appendix B as a template, discuss what actions a local church could take that would move the members toward a more connecting model of life. If you all represent the same church, decide to what degree you could begin to incorporate those patterns in the wider circle of the congregation.