

A Day with a Perfect Stranger

Reading Group Discussion Guide

1. What do you see as the primary theme of *A Day with a Perfect Stranger*? In what ways does this theme relate to your own life? Explain.
2. What would you say is the main purpose of Mattie's life before she encounters Jesus? What life purpose does Jesus invite her into?
3. Why does Mattie find her marriage unfulfilling? Can you relate in any way to the hopelessness Mattie feels about her relationship with Nick? Perhaps in your case it is a relationship, or perhaps something else. What is the hope that Jesus offers her? How does that hope relate to your situation?
4. How does Jesus use the word "religion" in the book (see page 57)? What does he say religion produces (see especially chapter 4)? In what ways has religiosity pushed you further away from real intimacy with God?
5. Jesus comments that people (men in this case) often "weren't loved for who they are but instead for how they performed" (pages 32–33). Where can you find love that is unconditional, rather than based on how you perform? How could knowing you are loved that way affect your life?
6. Talk about Jesus's and Mattie's discussion of fulfillment in life. From what things have you personally sought fulfillment? How much fulfillment did these things end up providing? Explain.
7. If your life continues in its current direction, when it draws to a close, will you have been ultimately fulfilled? Why or why not? What implications does this have for decisions you may want to make?
8. On page 66, Jesus says that "true fulfillment can't be found in the created realm. Only God himself can satisfy the human heart. You were created for God. Nothing else will satisfy." What implication does this have for how you are living your life?
9. Can you relate to how Mattie describes parenthood (pages 52–54)? If you are a parent, what does your love for your children tell you about God's love for you?
10. Read back through the Bible verses Jesus writes on the pad (pages 75 and 88). Based on these verses, how would you describe God's heart toward you?
11. On page 83, Jesus says, "The human heart, once distanced from God, is not easily won back to its source of life and goodness." Why do you think this is the case? What is blocking you from fully experiencing the source of true life?
12. Jesus speaks to Mattie about the importance of listening to God. To listen, one must be connected to him at the deepest level. How does Jesus indicate this connection is established (see the bottom of page 89). Have you made this permanent connection?
13. In the book, what does Jesus mean when he talks about delighting in God (see pages 78–79)? What would it look like for you to delight in God? How would it change your life if you did?
14. Think about Jesus's and Mattie's conversation about her sister Julie and suffering (pages 81–84). For Julie, why will having God overshadow the pain she has experienced? In what way can God's love heal all?
15. Think about suffering that you have experienced in your life. How do the following facts affect your perspective on suffering?
 - God himself suffered more than anyone by dying for your sins
 - God uses your suffering to awaken your need for true intimacy with him
16. Why would having God live in her, learning to listen to God's voice, and deeply knowing God's love enable Mattie to become the person she was meant to be?



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1. Do you ever wish you could have some sit-down-and-talk time with God? Why? If you could sit down one-on-one with Jesus, what are two questions you would like to ask him?
2. From the characterization in the book, how would you describe Jesus? What kind of person is he? What qualities of his stand out to you the most?
3. Is there such a thing as actual reality? Why is it important for our belief system to correspond to reality? What difference does it make if it does not? What's wrong with saying about someone's belief system that "It's true for them"?
4. How is Christianity distinct from the other primary world views, such as Islam, Hinduism, and atheistic naturalism (the material world is all there is)?
5. How is belief in God not a blind leap of faith? How is belief in Jesus as God in the flesh not a blind leap of faith?
6. On page 28, Jesus makes the statement, "You don't want what you're ultimately trusting to be wrong." What are you ultimately trusting concerning your eternal destiny? How do you know whether you will be with God for all eternity? If you have not received the free gift from God that Jesus explains on page 58, what is keeping you from doing so now?
7. Why isn't God interested in having people try to perform for him? Are you stuck on a performance basis with God, trying to please Him through your own efforts? How does He want you to depend on Him living through you instead?
8. If God's business is restoring relationships, what does he want your response to be toward him? Toward others?
9. What happens to someone on the inside when they place their trust in Jesus Christ?
10. In what sense is marriage "not about rules"? Why can God's relationship with us be described the same way?
11. What are the implications of the fact that God chose to suffer more than his creation suffered?
12. In what way is "God living in you" the best part of the message of Jesus? What difference should it make if God lives in us?
13. Which of the following aspects of the good news of Jesus Christ is most important to you:
 - getting your sins forgiven
 - being with God in eternity
 - have a real relationship with God now
 - receiving a changed heart with new desires from God
 - God living in you now and forever
14. What is the personal application for you of Revelation 3:20, the Bible verse that the book closes with? How can we dine with Jesus daily?
15. What are action step(s) you would like to take concerning yourself or others as a result of reading this book?

