

Just Walk Across the Room – Study Guide

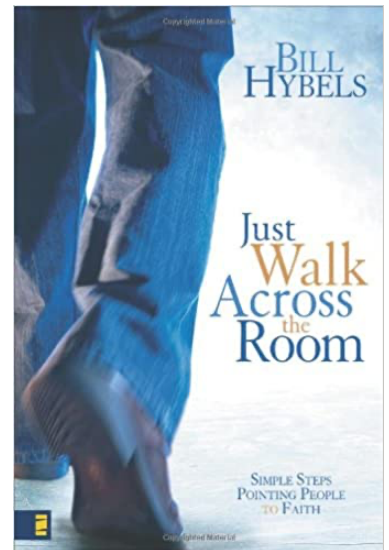
Book by Bill Hybels

What if you knew that by simply crossing the room and saying hello to someone, you could change that person's forever? Just a few steps to make an eternal difference. It has nothing to do with methods and everything to do with taking a genuine interest in another human being. All you need is a heart that's in tune with the Holy Spirit and a willingness to venture out of your "Circle of Comfort" and into another person's life. *Just Walk Across the Room* brings personal evangelism into the twenty-first century.

Building on the solid foundation laid in *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels shows how you can participate in the model first set by Jesus, who stepped down from heaven 2,000 years ago to bring hope and redemption to broken people living in a fallen world.

Now it's your turn. Your journey may not be as dramatic, but it can have a life-changing impact for someone standing a few steps away from you—and for you as well, as you learn the power of extending care, compassion, and inclusiveness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The highest value in personal evangelism is cooperating with the Spirit, says Hybels. This means playing only the role you're meant to play—walking when the Spirit says to walk, talking when he says to talk, and falling silent when he suggests that you've said enough.

Hybels encourages you to "live in 3D" ... Developing friendships Discovering stories Discerning appropriate next steps ... as a means of learning to understand the Holy Spirit's promptings. With fresh perspectives from his own reflections and experiences collected during his most recent decade of ministry, Bill Hybels shows with convincing and inspiring clarity the power of this personal, richly relational approach to evangelism. The stakes are high. The implications are eternal. And you may be only a conversation away from having an eternal impact on someone's life—if you will just walk across the room.



Introduction

1. After reading the introduction, what are your feelings and expectations about this book?
2. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why?
3. What is it you hope to get from this study? Write out your goals, individually and as a group, so you can review them when your study is over.
4. Take some time to pray and invite God into your study. Ask him what HE wants you to get out of this and add those things to your list. Ask him to speak to you and to give you open eyes, ears, mind, and heart to receive all that he has for you, in humility, as you move forward.

Chapter 1 – The Ultimate Walk Across a Room

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. In the story of the Muslim man coming to faith in Christ, to whom do you relate the most: the Muslim man himself, the man who walked across the room at the cocktail party, or one of the people still standing in the “Circle of Comfort”? Why?
3. Romans 5:8 says that it was while we were sinners that Christ saved us. Why is it significant that he “walked across the cosmos” while we were still in our sin?
4. In John 8, when Christ encounters the woman who has been caught in adultery, he immediately reflects God’s compassion, gentleness, and love. Does this picture mesh with who you know God to be? Why or why not?
5. Review this portion from page 29, where one of Christ’s desires for all believers is stated this way:

Live as though you actually *believe* that your parent, your coworker, and your neighbor would be better off if they knew my Father – if they were on the receiving end of his counsel, his wisdom, and his guidance. Become walk-across-the-room people who follow my lead! Be people who are willing to seize every opportunity I give you – not motivated by guilt or fear or obligation, but just with an eye on me, a pliable heart, and a passion for my people.
6. How would you rate yourself on the following items (use a 0 to 5 scale with 0 being completely false and 5 being completely true for each statement and then discuss):
 - a. I believe that every person I know would be better off living God’s way.
 - b. I live my life in such a way that others around me know I believe this.
 - c. I want to become more of a walk-across-the-room man or woman who jumps all over evangelistic opportunities God lays in my path.
 - d. I’m willing to let go of other passions so that God’s people can take top priority.
7. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
8. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 2 – The Way to Sustain Evangelism

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What evangelistic “fads” have you seen emerge throughout the course of your life? Did you participate in any of them? If so, what was your experience like?
3. Galatians 5:25 says that “since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” What would change about your perception of evangelism if your number one priority was to “keep in step with the Spirit” rather than memorizing formulas or winning souls?
4. Have you ever experienced what you would call “Spirit-directed promptings”? If so, describe a time when you knew God was asking you to do or say something. Did you obey the prompting? What was the experience like?
5. Take another look at the story of the staff member who wanted to meet with a community leader on pages 43-45. How do you think the author knew that he should go through with the meeting? In your own life, how do you know when to follow a prompting and when to stick to your day’s agenda as scheduled?
6. Throughout Scripture, God conveys his desire to communicate with his children. Consider the sentiment expressed below, quoted from page 37. Why is this type of attitude so critical in the life of a Christ-follower?

These days, I try to wake up each morning declaring, “My life is in *your* hands, God. Use me to point someone toward you today – I promise to cooperate in any way I can. If you want me to say a word for you today, I’ll do that. If you want me to keep quiet but demonstrate love and servanthood, by your Spirit’s power I will. I’m fully available to you today, so guide me by your Spirit.”

7. Do you really believe that someday the seed you sow will fall on the right soil and produce fruit? Why or why not? How would taking Christ at his word that you *will* produce fruit encourage you to get engaged in the work of evangelism?
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 3 – First, Develop Friendships

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Which life cycle is truest of your faith journey – the one that starts strong but fizzles out or the one that continues to reflect an ever-increasing amount of radical inclusiveness of all people, regardless of where they are on their spiritual path?
3. Is this life cycle the one you want to be known for? What steps can you take to grow more toward the model Christ has given us for spreading his grace to a needy world?
4. Can you relate to the “horse trading” concept? Have you ever privately horse-traded away your responsibility in evangelism? If so, what fears or inhibitions caused you to do so?
5. On page 67, you read that “Jesus had a corner on the ‘potential’ market. He had an uncanny ability to look past the obvious flaws in people’s lives and envision who they could become if the power of God were released in their lives.” What obvious flaws – or “withered parts” did you have before coming to Christ?
6. Now think about the people in your life who helped point you toward faith along the way. What potential do you think they spotted in you before you submitted your life to Christ?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best possible, where would you rate yourself in terms of spotting potential in others who are still living far from God?
8. In the list below, which two character traits would help you personally move toward immediately seeing the potential in people that God sees? Spend some time in prayer, asking God to cultivate these traits in you today.

<input type="checkbox"/> Love	<input type="checkbox"/> Patience	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Compassion	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith
<input type="checkbox"/> Tenderness	<input type="checkbox"/> Mercy	<input type="checkbox"/> Humility	<input type="checkbox"/> Optimism	<input type="checkbox"/> Joy
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Control	<input type="checkbox"/> Goodness	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/> Wisdom
9. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
10. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 4 – Next, Discover Stories

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Which area of effectiveness do you practice most in your interactions with people far from God?
 - Proximity – choosing to traffic where seekers traffic
 - Staying in style – trusting God to use your natural personality
 - Practicing commonality – watching for ways to build bridges instead of walls
 - Being sensitive – remembering that irreligious people won't be very holy when you find them
3. Which “evangelistic style” below most closely reflects your own? Please explain. See pages 85-86 for examples of each style.
 - Confrontational
 - Intellectual
 - Interpersonal
 - Invitational
 - Serving
 - Testimonial
 - Others _____
4. Think about your present sphere of influence – including where you live, where you work, the people in your small group, your friends, your relatives, your acquaintances, and so on. How do you think God expects your specific evangelistic style to impact the lives of these people?
5. What is one action item you can accomplish this week that will cause you to use your evangelistic style in discovering another person's story?
6. Have you ever encountered someone's “messy reality” as described in the story beginning on page 90? What was the experience like? Based on this reality, why do you suppose it is so important to listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance in *all* evangelistic situations?
7. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
8. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 5 – Finally, Discern Next Steps

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. On pages 95-96, you were reminded that “you don’t have to be any more talented, any richer, any slimmer, any smarter, any more or less of *anything* to partner with God. All you have to be is willing to be used by him in everyday ways.” Why do you suppose this is so difficult for most people to believe?
3. Thinking back on the story of the elderly woman who needed to scale a snowbank, consider the following question: How willing are you to have your day interrupted by someone else’s need?
 - Very willing! It seems as though God gives me opportunities such as these every single day!
 - Somewhat willing... but it usually takes me a few moments to adjust to the interruption.
 - Not so willing. This is a tough season of life for me, frankly, and even to get my *own* needs met seems to require Herculean effort.
4. Part of becoming a Resource Provider requires that you focus your attention on anything a person says that reveals a potential need you could meet. What would it look like for you to stay focused on *other people’s needs* in a conversation?
5. The author wrote in this chapter that each time he’s present when a friend hits “rock bottom,” he’s so grateful to God that he stayed the course instead of bailing too soon on the relationship. Have you ever “stayed the course” in a relationship and reaped benefits as a result? If so, what was the experience like?
6. Look again at the definition of the “be with” factor in this chapter. In your life right now, who are you “being with”? In other words, which of your friends or family members would testify that you are in it for the long haul with them – relating with them, knowing them, loving them, consistently pointing them toward faith?
7. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
8. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 6 – Your Own Before-and-After

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Thinking back on this chapter's assumption that everyone loves a good story, what are your favorite Bible stories and why?
3. It seems that most Bible characters were known for their faith. Have you ever been asked about your faith? What response do you usually give when people inquire about your relationship with God?
4. This chapter offers four main criticisms of faith stories. Which one are you most in danger of using?

Long-windedness Fuzziness Religionese Superiority

5. Assuming you wrote out your "before-and-after" at the end of the chapter, who can you enlist to serve as your "audience" this week? Tell your faith story to three different people (maybe even to your group today, if there's time), and have them grade you on the following criteria:

Brevity (You told your story in the space of 45-80 seconds)

Clarity (You stuck to one key plot line)

Simplicity (You avoided "religionese")

Humility (You told your story without a pious or haughty attitude)

6. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
7. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 7 – God’s Good News

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Do you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the reason God built a bridge for you was because his desire to span the chasm separating you from him was *just that great*?
3. Choose one or two of the following passages of Scripture to read and meditate on today. Let them be reminders of God’s immense love for you.

Psalm 27:10

Psalm 55:22

Psalm 71:17-18

Psalm 147:3

Romans 5:5

Romans 5:8

Romans 8:35, 38-39

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

4. Which of the illustrations presented in this chapter most resonates with why you first came to Christ?
 - The Bridge – God love you so much that he asked his Son to serve as a bridge to span the chasm that separated you from him.
 - Do versus Done – You don’t have to earn your way into God’s favor; the work Christ accomplished on the cross declared payment for your sin “done.”
 - The Morality Ladder – Despite how good you are, you are far from perfect. The only way to make up your “morality gap,” the gap between your standard of living and God’s perfect and holy standard, is by relying on the person of Christ.
5. Can you envision yourself sharing one of these illustrations with a friend of yours who is living far from God? What fears or concerns might keep you from doing so?
6. The Avoiders versus the Erupters. Sounds like a low-budget wrestling match, doesn’t it? On a scale in which Avoiders are 1 and Erupters are 10, where would you place yourself? How would you define a “happy medium” on the Avoiders/Erupters scale?

When spiritual opportunities arise...

I tend to shut down

I tend to spew the truth on people

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

7. At the close of this chapter, you read that “in heaven’s reality, a perfect environment exists, full of rich relationship, beauty, joy, peace, and rest.” Think of three of your friends who might be interested in knowing this truth. On a sheet of paper, jot down their names and the reasons why they might want to know this truth. Ask God to reveal ways that you can begin conveying this information to them! Pray together for wisdom and courage to follow through with this process.
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 8 – Lessons from the Master

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Like the woman at the well, have you ever felt dusty, weary, and worn down by life? What experience comes to mind?
3. Jesus' response to the woman at the well was acceptance rather than condemnation and forgiveness rather than rebuke. How have you experienced God's acceptance and forgiveness in your own life?
4. One of the lessons from this chapter is that as Christ-followers, we should be in the business of bridging chasms. On page 156, you read that it's important to develop friendships with "those who are lovely. With those who are unlovely. With the successful and the struggling. With the outgoing and the recluse. With the accepted and the outcast. With those who are just like us and with those who are far different." As you assess your own friendship patterns, whom do you typically reach out to?

- | | | |
|--|----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lovely people | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> People who are difficult to love |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Successful people | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> People who are struggling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are outgoing | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Recluses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People who are easy to accept | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Those who are outcasts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People who are just like you | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> People far different from you |

Why do you think Christ encourages his followers to be radically accepting of *all* people?

5. Greg Ferguson's song "Peacemaker" articulates many of God's promises to his children. Which of the following roles do you most need God to play in your life today and why?

<input type="checkbox"/> Peacemaker	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear-taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Soul-soother	<input type="checkbox"/> Storm-smoother
<input type="checkbox"/> Light-shiner	<input type="checkbox"/> Lost-finder	<input type="checkbox"/> Cloud-lifter	<input type="checkbox"/> Deliverer
<input type="checkbox"/> Mind-clearer	<input type="checkbox"/> Sigh-hearer	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand-holder	<input type="checkbox"/> Consoler
<input type="checkbox"/> Wound-binder	<input type="checkbox"/> Tear-drier	<input type="checkbox"/> Strength-giver	<input type="checkbox"/> Provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart-healer	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind Father		
6. Are there people in your world who might also need to know that God can soothe their souls, smooth their storms, and dry their tears? Ask God supernaturally to reveal the needs of people in your life, and then find a way – whether by phone or email or a letter or an in-person visit – to tell them with confidence that there is a God in heaven who created them, who loves them, who has already gone before them, and who will be their everlasting Peacemaker if they so choose.
7. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
8. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 9 – Big Fish Invitations

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Think about the people you know at work, in your social life, at church, in your extended family, and so on. Do most people you know spend their lives for dollars or invest their lives for destinies?
3. If human nature says to chase the dollar, then why do you think Peter, James, and John were willing to follow Jesus and work to impact people's eternal destinies?
4. For Chuck Colson, choosing to live the Grander Vision meant radically shifting his priorities after being released from prison and investing in inmates' futures, both professionally and spiritually. In your particular situation, what would it look like for you to say yes to God's Grander Vision?
5. Reflecting back on the sailing analogy noted on pages 181-82, are there aspects of your life where you're still opting for the "hats" instead of pursuing the "hardware"? What keeps you settling for less than God's best in your life?
6. How did you feel when you read the story of the speaker who labeled everything "Temporary" at the conference? Why do you suppose so many people assign permanent significance to things that will one day fade away?
7. Think of one aspect of your life that you will choose to see through Grander Vision Living lenses today (check out the last paragraph of this chapter for a few suggestions), and be prepared to view the world differently than ever before!
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 10 – Matthew’s Deepest Desire

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Why do you suppose Jesus chose ordinary fishermen and corrupt tax collectors as disciples rather than handpicking people who were a bit more cultured and holy?
3. What types of things did you give up in order to follow Jesus? Has it been worth it? Why or why not?
4. Matthew – a former tax collector himself – was probably keenly aware that his former business associates would think he was crazy to cash in his entire career and follow Jesus instead. If Matthew were alive today and came to you for advice on how to deal with the raised eyebrows and cynical questions of his old friends, what would you say?
5. Despite the fact that Matthew had only been following Jesus for a short time when he decided to host his banquet, somehow he knew he could trust Jesus to be gracious and accepting of his close friends – most of whom were also corrupt tax collectors. Do you believe Jesus is still in the business of receiving people in this manner? Why or why not?
6. On pages 200-201, you read that no matter who you are, you too can do this – you too can host a Matthew Party and allow spiritual sparks to fly right in your own living room. Think creatively about the opportunity that is now in front of you. What type of Matthew Party would you have? Who would you invite, and what would you hope they would glean from the experience?
7. Take some time to plan a Matthew Party that your group can host within the next month. Plan to invite at least 10 people to your event who are not part of your group or church. When will you do it? What will you do? Who will prepare the food? What will you discuss? Be specific and plan to follow through. It can be a great way to celebrate the end of this study! Of course, know that this might grow and change your group – you might even have to split into two groups! Do you dare? Is it worth it?
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 11 – Open Doors

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What is your greatest take-away from this chapter?
3. Which do you find easier to maintain, the practice of “catch” praying – offering up ongoing bursts of communication with God – of the practice of “closet” praying – committing to times of intense, private dialogue with him? What might you stand to gain from honing your abilities in the other arena?
4. Part of Paul’s request in Colossians 4 is for people to pray for open doors in his ministry. Have you ever seen God open a door right after you prayed for one? Describe your experience.
5. Another part of Paul’s request deals with the manner in which the message would get conveyed. What do you think it means for a Christ-follower’s speech to be “full of grace”?
6. Look over this chapter again and review the three evangelistic “irreducible ingredients.” Why do you suppose the third ingredient is so critical to communicate to people who are living far from God?
7. As you reflect on the closing scene of this book, whose faces come to mind? Which of your unconvinced friends and family members are you hoping to bump into on the streets of heaven someday? How might your decision to become a walk-across-the-room person increase the likelihood of their eternal presence there?
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Conclusion

1. What stuck out to you most from this study? What have you learned about God that you did not know before? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about others?
2. Take some time to review your goals from the beginning of your study. What goals have you accomplished, what are you still working on, and what do you need help with?
3. What questions do you still have after completing this study?
4. Finally, so what? What are you going to do with what you’ve studied, learned, and discussed? Be specific.
5. Now spend some time in prayer, asking God to awaken his purposes within you concerning this study. Consider whether you need to spend time in repentance, in a time of commitment and commissioning, or in a time of surrender. Add this to your prayer time as the Holy Spirit guides you.