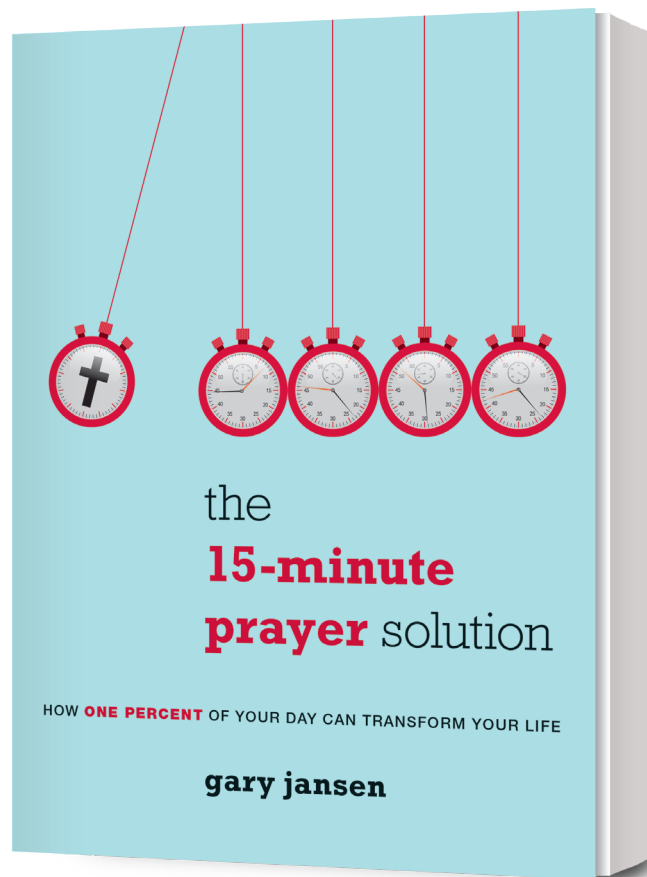




ONE BOOK ONE PARISH

A Six-Week Discussion Guide



WEEK ONE: Chapters 1–4

1. Share an experience in which you felt the presence of God-felt grace. How did you know it was grace? What made it feel different?
2. Do you already have a regular prayer regimen? If yes, please share it with the group and what benefits you see from it. Are there ways in which you want to change it? If no, what benefits are you hoping to see after you start? What do you think of the comparison between exercising our bodies and exercising our souls?
3. How realistic does the idea of “daily spiritual exercises” seem to you? Do you think 1% of your day can really make that much of a difference?
4. What are the excuses that you put between yourself and living a spiritual life?
5. What are some of the blemishes and imperfections that you have allowed to color the beauty that is already in front of you?
6. What has been your experience with prayer, meditation, or contemplation? Does it match what author Gary Jansen describes?

WEEK TWO: Chapters 5–8

1. Have you ever thought your way into the “wrong things”?
2. How does it make you feel to know that even Mother Teresa felt alienated from God? Have you ever felt like you were reaching out to God but did not receive a response?
3. Practice the breathing prayers in Chapter 6. How do you feel after practicing them? How does timing the words to your breathing affect how you experience the prayers?
4. Practice the centering prayer on page 76. What word do you focus on? How do you feel after practicing this?
5. Practice the *lectio divina* prayer on pages 82-84. If you feel comfortable doing this, share with the group your experience, what you felt God saying to you, and how you responded.

WEEK THREE: Chapters 9–11

1. Discuss the story of the man asking “What is the Holy Spirit?” on pages 85-86. What do you think of the answer he finally received?
2. How is the Spirit flowing through you? Is the valve all the way open, or are you living each day drip by drip?
3. Ask yourself how you can be of service each morning this week. What are some of the opportunities to serve that come your way?
4. Choose a scene from Scripture—perhaps the scene in Exodus described on page 101. If you are comfortable doing this, share with the group your imaginative prayer experience. What did you say, hear, feel? With whom did you speak? How was your perspective changed?

WEEK FOUR: Chapters 12–14

1. Practice either of the exercises in Chapter 12. What is your reaction to them?
2. Practice the God's Hands exercise on pages 110-111. If you feel comfortable, share with the group the problem you placed in God's Hands. What happened to it? Do you think you could do this with other problems?
3. Attempt to practice the Examen twice a day this week, even if you can't do it perfectly. What effects do you notice as a result? Could you keep doing it in the future?

WEEK FIVE: Chapters 15–18

1. Practice the Dying to God exercise on pages 124-125. Where do you see the face of Jesus? Is there a point in your life where you feel like you died to your old ways?
2. Practice the Acceptance Speech exercise on page 131. Where did you notice God in a person or place where it surprised you?
3. Make your own cross and practice the Geometry of the Cross as described on pages 133-136. Where did you feel your life intersect with God?
4. Think on the Scorsese exercise from page 139. Now that you have been practicing these prayer techniques, do you think you are starting to see a fuller picture of life?

WEEK SIX: Chapters 19–25

Plan to perform the seven-day spiritual exercise beginning on page 145, then return to your group to discuss the questions below.

1. With which parable did you most connect? Why?
2. Think of the Day One parable. Where in your life do you find healthy soil?
3. Think of the Day Three parable. Have you ever lost something and tried desperately to find it? What ultimately happened?
4. Think of the Day Five parable. When have you shown mercy to others? Who has shown mercy to you?
5. Think of the Day Seven parable. Is this story fair? Have you ever felt like the older sibling, seemingly penalized for doing the right thing while someone else appears to break the rules with impunity? Share this experience with the group and how it ultimately resolved.